G. R. Barrell

# THROUGH THE CHURCH GATE

## Book II

## THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

DARTON, LONGMAN & TODD

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G.R.B.

# *Introduction*

This is one of a series of four books about the Church of England. Its aim is to give the reader an outline to the faith, life, worship, and organisation of the Church —to lead him, as it were, inside the gate. Although the four books are intended to be read in order, each is complete in itself, and covers one aspect of the Established Church.

The first book deals with the things which are most easily seen and which, therefore, are the first things about which questions may be asked. In a very brief outline it covers the history of the Church, its organisation and outward forms. In the second book the reader is taken, step by step, through the Christian year and its orderly round of worship. The third book is concerned with the Prayer Book as a guide to human life, helping the traveller to find his way at each crossroads he reaches on his journey from the cradle to the grave. Finally, in the fourth book, we come to consider some important aspects of the work of the Church in the present time, and also the privileges and responsibilities of Church membership.

One word of explanation is needed. At a number of points in this series comparisons have been made between the practice of the Church of England and the other religious bodies which are to be found in this country. This has been done because there is often ignorance both of the similarities and of the differences which exist. The fact that the amount of space devoted to the other Churches is very small in comparison with the books as a whole is not

due to any desire to minimise the work which they have done and continue to do. These books are, however, primarily intended for Church folk who wish to know more about their own church and its working, and for this reason it has been necessary to keep the Church of England firmly in the centre of the picture.

# *The Calendar*

The Calendar which follows is arranged in columns to show the feasts as given in the Calendars printed in the 1662 and 1928 Prayer Books with their liturgical colours. The names of red-letter feasts are printed in **bold** type; those of black-letter days in *italics*.

*Abbreviations used*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | Apostle | D | Deacon |
| Abp | Archbishop | Dr | Doctor |
| Abs | Abbess | E | Evangelist |
| Abt | Abbot | K | King |
| Adn | Archdeacon | M | Martyr |
| B | Bishop | Mn | Matron |
| BVM | Blessed Virgin Mary | P | Priest (or Presbyter) |
| C | Confessor | Q | Queen |
| Comp | Companions | V | Virgin |

| | |
|---|---|
| W | White |
| R | Red |
| Y | Yellow |
| V | Violet |
| G | Green |

## DECEMBER

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | .. .. .. .. | *Clement*, Dr. | Y |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | *Nicholas*, B. of Myra | *Nicolas*, B. of Myra | Y |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | *Conception of BVM.* .. | *Conception of BVM.* | W |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | *Lucy*, V. M. | | R |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | *O Sapientia* | *O Sapientia* | V |
| 17 | .. .. .. .. | *Ignatius*, B.M. | R |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | Fast | | |
| 21 | **St Thomas**, A.M. | **St Thomas**, A. | R |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | | | |
| 24 | Fast | Vigil | |
| 25 | **Christmas Day** | **Christmas Day** | W |
| 26 | **St Stephen**, M. | **St Stephen**, M. | R |
| 27 | **St John**, A.E. | **St John**, A.E. | W |
| 28 | **Innocents' Day** | **Innocents' Day** | R |
| 29 | | | |
| 30 | | | |
| 31 | *Silvester*, B. | | W |

*Note.* The colour for St Silvester is white because this feast falls within the octave of a greater feast (in this case, Christmas Day) for which the white colour is continued for a week. Otherwise this day would be yellow.

# JANUARY

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Circumcision of our Lord** | **Circumcision of our Lord** | W |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | **Epiphany of our Lord** | **Epiphany of our Lord** | W |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | **Lucian,** P.M. | | W |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | *Hilary,* B.C. | *Hilary,* B.Dr. | W |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | .. .. .. .. | *Antony of Egypt,* Abt. | Y |
| 18 | *Prisca,* V.M. | | R |
| 19 | .. .. .. .. | *Wulfstan,* B. of Worcester | Y |
| 20 | *Fabian,* B.M. | *Fabian,* B.M. | R |
| 21 | *Agnes,* V.M. | *Agnes,* V.M. | R |
| 22 | *Vincent,* D.M. | *Vincent,* D.M. | R |
| 23 | | | |
| 24 | | | |
| 25 | **Conversion of St Paul,** A.M. | **Conversion of St Paul,** A.M. | R |
| 26 | .. .. .. .. | *Polycarp,* B.M. | R |
| 27 | .. .. .. .. | *John Chrysostom,* B.Dir. | Y |
| 28, 29, 30, 31. | (*Note.* There are no entries for these days.) | | |

*Note.* The colour for St Lucian and St Hilary is white, because these feasts fall within the octave (or week following) a greater feast for which the colour is continued throughout the octave. Otherwise they would be red and yellow respectively.

## FEBRUARY

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | **Purification of BVM.**[1] | **Purification of BVM.**[1] | W |
| 3 | *Blasius*, B.M. | *Anskar*, B. | R or Y |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | *Agatha*, V.M. | | R |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | *Valentine*, B.M. | | R |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | | | |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | | | |
| 23 | Fast | | |
| 24 | **St Matthias,** A.M. | **St Matthias,** A.M. | R |
| 25 | | | |
| 26 | | | |
| 27 | | | |
| 28 | | | |
| (29) | | | |

[1] Also known as the **Presentation of Christ in the Temple,** or **Candlemas.**

## MARCH

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *David*, Abp. | *David*, B. of Menevia | Y |
| 2 | *Chad*, B. of Lichfield | *Chad*, B. of Lichfield | Y |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | *Perpetua*, M. | *Perpetua and her Companions*, MM. | R |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | *Gregory the Great*, B.C. | *Gregory the Great*, B.Dr. | Y |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | .. .. .. .. | *Patrick*, B. of Ireland | Y |
| 18 | *Edward*, K.M. | | R |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | .. .. .. .. | *Cuthbert*, B. of Lindisfarne | Y |
| 21 | *Benedict*, Abt. | *Benedict*, Abt. | Y |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | | | |
| 24 | Fast | | |
| 25 | **Annunciation of BVM.** | **Annunciation of our Lady** | W |
| 26 | | | |
| 27 | | | |
| 28 | | | |
| 29 | | | |
| 30 | | | |
| 31 | | | |

## APRIL

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | *Richard*, B. of Chichester | *Richard*, B. of Chichester | Y |
| 4 | *Ambrose*, B | *Ambrose*, B.Dr. | Y |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | .. .. .. .. | *Leo the Great*, B.Dr. | Y |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | *Alphege*, Abp. of Canterbury | *Alphege*, Abp.M. | R |
| 20 | | | |
| 21 | .. .. .. .. | *Anselm*, Abp.Dr. | Y |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | *St George*, M. | *St George*, M. | R |
| 24 | | | |
| 25 | **St Mark,** E.M. .. | **St Mark,** E.M. | R |
| 26 | | | |
| 27 | | | |
| 28 | | | |
| 29 | | | |
| 30 | .. .. .. .. | *Catherine of Siena*, V. | R |

## MAY

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **St Philip and St James,** AA. MM. | **St Philip and St James,** AA. MM. | R |
| 2 | .. .. .. .. | *Athanasius*, B.Dr. | Y |
| 3 | *Invention of the Cross* | *Invention of the Cross* | R |
| 4 | .. .. .. .. | *Monnica*, Mn. | Y |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | *St John*, E. *ante Portam Latinam* | *St John*, E. *ante Portam Latinam* | R |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | *Dunstan*, Abp. of Can'bury | *Dunstan*, Abp. of Can'bury | Y |
| 20 | | | |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | | | |
| 24 | | | |
| 25 | .. .. .. .. | *Aldhelm*, B. of Sherborne | Y |
| 26 | *Augustine*, Abp. of Canterbury | *Augustine*, Abp. of Canterbury | Y |
| 27 | *Venerable Bede*, P. | *Venerable Bede*, P.Dr. | Y |
| 28 | | | |
| 29 | | | |
| 30 | | | |
| 31 | | | |

## JUNE

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Nicomede*, P.M. | | R |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | *Boniface*, B.M. | *Boniface*, B.M. | R |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | .. .. .. .. | *Columba*, Abt. of Iona | Y |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | **St Barnabas,** A.M. | **St Barnabas,** A. | R |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | .. .. .. . | *Basil*, B.Dr. | Y |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | *St Alban*, M. | | R |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | *Translation of Edward*, K.M. | | R |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | .. .. .. .. | *Alban*, M. | R |
| 23 | Fast | Vigil | |
| 24 | **Nativity of St John the Baptist** | **Nativity of St John the Baptist** | W |
| 25 | | | |
| 26 | | | |
| 27 | | | |
| 28 | Fast | *Irenaeus*, B.Dr. | Y |
| 29 | **St Peter,** A.M. | **St Peter,** A.M. | R |
| 30 | | | |

# JULY

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | | | |
| 2 | *Visitation of BVM.* | *Visitation of BVM.* | W |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | *Translation of Martin*, B.C. | | Y |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | *Swithun*, B. of Winchester | *Swithun*, B. of Winchester | Y |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | *Margaret*, V.M. | *Margaret*, V.M. | R |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | *St Mary Magdalen* | **St Mary Magdalen** | W |
| 23 | | | |
| 24 | Fast | | |
| 25 | **St James,** A.M. | **St James the Great,** A.M. | R |
| 26 | *St Anne, Mother of BVM.* | *Anne, Mother of BVM.* | Y |
| 27 | | | |
| 28 | | | |
| 29 | | | |
| 30 | | | |
| 31 | | | |

## AUGUST

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Lammas Day* | *Lammas Day* | R |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | .. .. .. .. | *Oswald*, K.M. | R |
| 6 | *Transfiguration of our Lord* | **Transfiguration of our Lord** | W |
| 7 | *Name of Jesus* | *Name of Jesus* | W |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | *Laurence*, Adn.M. | *Laurence*, D.M. | R |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | *Bernard*, Abt. | *Bernard*, Abt of Clairvaux | Y |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | Fast | | |
| 24 | **St Bartholomew**, A.M. | **St Bartholomew**, A. | R |
| 25 | | | |
| 26 | | | |
| 27 | | | |
| 28 | *St Augustine*, B.C.Dr. | *St Augustine*, B.Dr. | Y |
| 29 | *Beheading of St John the Baptist* | *Beheading of St John the Baptist* | R |
| 30 | | | |
| 31 | .. .. .. .. | *Aidan*, B. of Lindisfarne | Y |

## SEPTEMBER

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Giles*, Abt.C. | *Giles*, Abt. | Y |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | *Evurtius*, B. | | Y |
| 8 | *Nativity of BVM.* | *Nativity of BVM.* | W |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | .. .. .. .. | *Cyprian, B.M.* | R |
| 14 | *Holy Cross Day* | *Holy Cross Day* | R |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | .. .. .. .. | *Ninian*, B. in Galloway | Y |
| 17 | *Lambert*, B.M. | | R |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | .. .. .. .. | *Theodore*, Abp. of Canterbury | Y |
| 20 | Fast | | |
| 21 | **St Matthew**, A.E.M. .. | **St Matthew**, A.E. | R |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | | | |
| 24 | | | |
| 25 | | | |
| 26 | *St Cyprian, Abp.M.* | | R |
| 27 | | | |
| 28 | | | |
| 29 | **St Michael and All Angels** | **St Michael and All Angels** | W |
| 30 | *Jerome*, P.Dr. | *Jerome*, P.Dr. | Y |

## OCTOBER

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *Remigius*, B. of Rheims | *Remigius*, B. of Rheims | Y |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | .. .. .. .. | *Francis of Assisi* | Y |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | *Faith*, V.M. | *Faith*, V.M. | Y |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | *St Denys*, B.M. | *Denys*, B.M. | R |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | *Translation of Edward*, K.C. | *Translation of Edward*, K.C. | Y |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | *Etheldreda*, V. | *Etheldreda*, Q.Abs. | W |
| 18 | **St Luke**, E. | **St Luke**, E. | R |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | | | |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | | | |
| 24 | | | |
| 25 | *Crispin*, M. | *Crispin and Crispinian*, MM. | R |
| 26 | | | |
| 27 | Fast | *Alfred*, K. | Y |
| 28 | **St Simon and St Jude**, AA. MM. | **St Simon and St Jude**, AA. MM. | R |
| 29 | | | |
| 30 | | | |
| 31 | Fast | Vigil | |

## NOVEMBER

| | 1662 | 1928 | *Colour* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **All Saints' Day** | **All Saints' Day** | W |
| 2 | .. .. .. .. | *Commemoration of All Souls* | B |
| 3 | | | |
| 4 | | | |
| 5 | | | |
| 6 | *Leonard*, C. | *Leonard*, Abt. | Y |
| 7 | | | |
| 8 | .. .. .. .. | *Saints, Martyrs and Doctors of the Church of England* | G |
| 9 | | | |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | *St Martin*, B.C. | *Martin*, B. of Tours | Y |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | *Britius*, B. | | Y |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | *Machutus*, B. | | Y |
| 16 | .. .. .. .. | *Hugh*, B. of Lincoln | Y |
| 17 | *Hugh*, B. of Lincoln | *Hilda*, Abs. of Whitby | Y |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | *Edmund*, K.M. | *Edmund*, K.M. | R |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | *Cecilia*, V.M. | *Cecilia*, V.M. | R |
| 23 | *Clement*, B.M. | *Clement*, B.M. | R |
| 24 | | | |
| 25 | *Catherine*, V.M. | *Catherine*, V.M. | R |
| 26 | | | |
| 27 | | | |
| 28 | | | |
| 29 | Fast | Vigil | |
| 30 | **St Andrew**, A.M. | **St Andrew**, A.M. | R |

*Note.* When November 30th falls on a Sunday it is kept as the first Sunday in Advent, and the feast of St Andrew is transferred to December.

# I

# *Times and Seasons*

YESTERDAY was Sunday. It was also the thirtieth of November. On the way downstairs in the morning I looked in on Douglas.

'A happy New Year!' I said.

He rolled over in bed and blinked. 'But it isn't even Christmas yet. You can't wish people a happy New Year until that's over,' he protested.

He was right—and wrong. According to our everyday reckoning the year starts at the beginning of January, and we use this calendar year when we are talking about the date when things have happened, or when we are making plans about what we are going to do. The Christian year, however, is quite different and begins on the first Sunday in Advent. This is the Sunday nearest to the last day of November, so that it may come just before, or just after, that date. Occasionally the thirtieth of November itself falls on a Sunday, in which case this is the first Sunday in Advent.

Like the calendar year the Christian year is made up of a number of seasons and, during each of these, the Church thinks and prays particularly about one part of the Christian faith. The reason for this is to make sure that no part is forgotten and no part is given too much attention. The farmer has to keep to the natural seasons

in his work, ploughing at one time of the year, sowing seed at another, and reaping at another. He would be a poor farmer if he tried to plough all the year round, or if he tried to sow corn when he should be reaping. And if he forgot to sow any seed at all one year, there would be no harvest to gather. So at one season the Church thinks particularly about the birth of our Lord, at another about his death and resurrection, at another about the coming of the Holy Spirit, and so on. Some of the seasons are times of joy and thanksgiving, others are times of penitence and sorrow.

Even when it occurs during a season of penitence Sunday is always a festival. Easter Day is, of course, the day when we think most about our Lord's resurrection but because this, the greatest miracle of all, happened on the first day of the week and lies right at the centre of the Church's teaching, Christians have never been content with just an annual reminder of Christ's victory over death. Ever since the first Easter Day the first day of the week has always been greeted by Christians with especial joy. Although the first Easter morning occurred almost two thousand years ago, the resurrection has been remembered by the Church on each of the hundred thousand or so Sundays which have dawned since that day.

A festival, or feast, is a time of gaiety and happiness, but there are other occasions when it has been the custom of Christians to do without some of the ordinary pleasures of life in order to remember our Lord's suffering for us. These days are called fasts and at one time many Christians ate only sufficient food to keep themselves alive on such occasions. All Fridays are fasts, as are all weekdays during Lent. Remarkable stories are told of the

endurance of some of the saints during the forty days of the Lenten fast. In our own time it is still a common practice for Christians to eat fish instead of meat on Fridays as a token sign that they are fasting. It was the rule of the monks that they ate nothing between Compline, the last service of the day, and Mass the next morning. Only then were they allowed to break their fast, and we still call the first meal of the day breakfast.

It is not possible to mark all the seasons of the Christian year on the Calendar at the beginning of this book because some do not fall on the same date each year. If, however, you look at the diagram on page 6, you will see their order. Certain days are, however, fixed according to the calendar year, and you will find that they have been printed in two different kinds of type. These days are feasts which break into the main story of the seasons; most of them are saints' days when some particular hero of the Church is remembered by name, whilst others are connected with the life of our Lord and of his mother. Like Sundays, these days are observed as festivals even when they occur during a season of penitence. **When they are printed in bold type like this they are called red-letter days,** because in the old prayer books they were printed in red ink. *Those which are printed in italic type like this are called black-letter days*, and were printed in black ink.

The red-letter days, including all the feasts of our Lord and the saints of the New Testament, are the most important, and the Prayer Book makes provision for them with a 'proper'—a special collect, epistle, and gospel for use on that day. These are the days of obligation when everyone should try to be present at the Holy Communion in the morning. Work used to be forbidden on these

holy days, and we still call days which are free from work 'holidays'. At one time there were no other holidays at all.

Four of the holy days divide the year roughly into quarters and were once set aside for the payment of debts and other business dealings. The quarter days are still used for some such purposes—particularly in connection with the letting of property and the payment of rent. Farms usually change hands at Michaelmas, when the harvest has been gathered and the new farming year is about to begin. The quarter days were the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary ('Lady Day') on March 25th, the feast of St John the Baptist ('Midsummer Day') on June

*Fig. 1 Midsummer Day—medieval revels.*

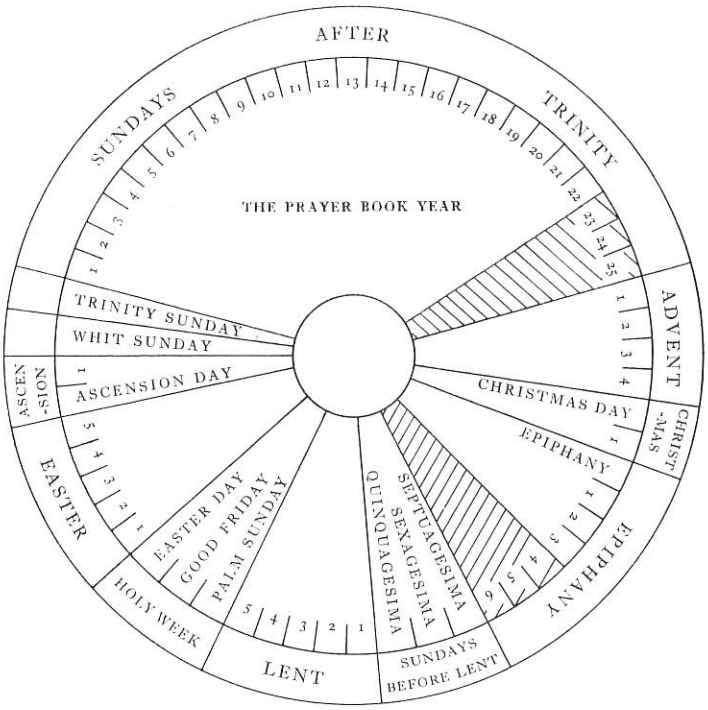
24th, the feast of St Michael and All Angels (Michaelmas Day) on September 29th, and Christmas Day on December 25th.

The Jewish day began and ended at sunset and the red-letter days are still observed by the Church from the time of the evening service on the previous day. The day before a feast is called its eve or vigil, and in the case of red-letter days is usually a fast. The feast begins with Evensong on the day of the vigil, and does not end until after Evensong on the day of the feast itself. In some churches the red-letter days are observed with an octave, and the proper collect, epistle, and gospel are used for eight days, including the feast itself.

In nearly every case a saint is remembered on the day of his death. If it seems strange to make a festival of the anniversary of someone's death, you must remember that the Church has always thought of death as the entry into life in a new world, rather than the end of human life. For a Christian, therefore, the date of his death is his true birthday.

The Calendar at the beginning of this book shows the holy days in the Prayer Books of 1662 and 1928. The former is still the official Calendar of the Church of England as the 1928 Prayer Book was not accepted by Parliament. Since, however, many Churches use the 1928 Calendar, both have been included.

Some of the lesser-known saints were left out of the new Calendar, and certain others were added. In the early Church it is probable that some Christians of particularly saintly life were first commemorated in the places where they had lived, and it was some years before they were accepted as saints by the whole Church. The first saints were the apostles—those whom our Lord chose to

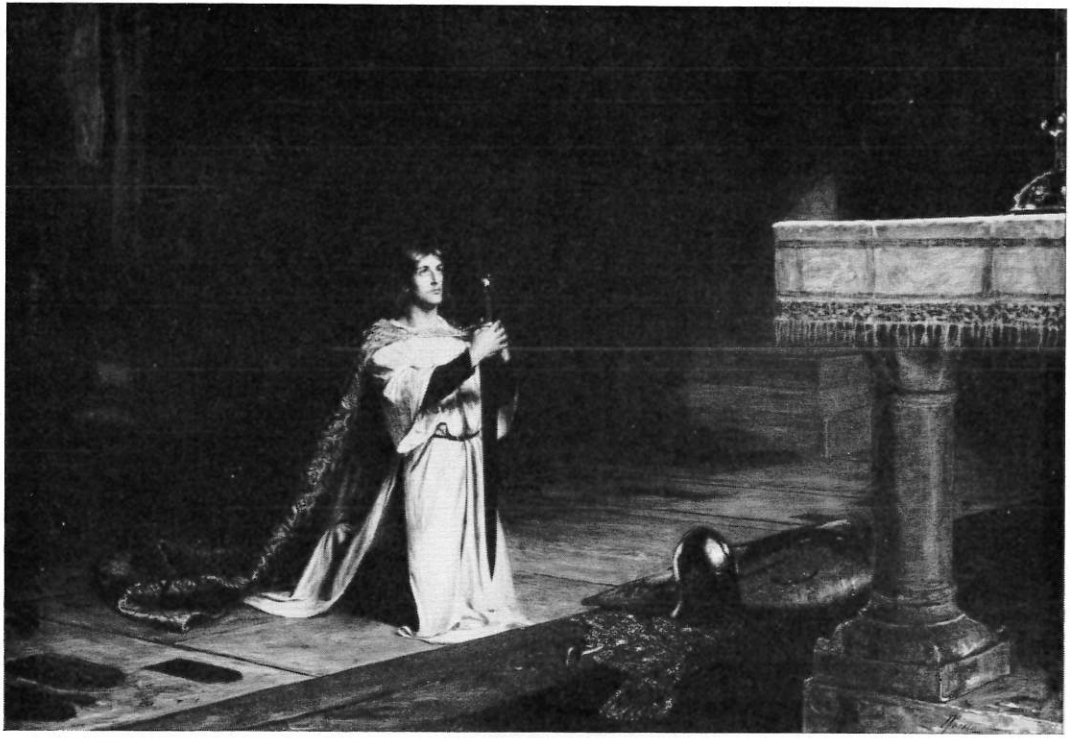



*The date of Easter can vary anything up to three weeks. The number of Sundays after Epiphany and the number of Sundays after Trinity increases or decreases depending on when Easter falls.*

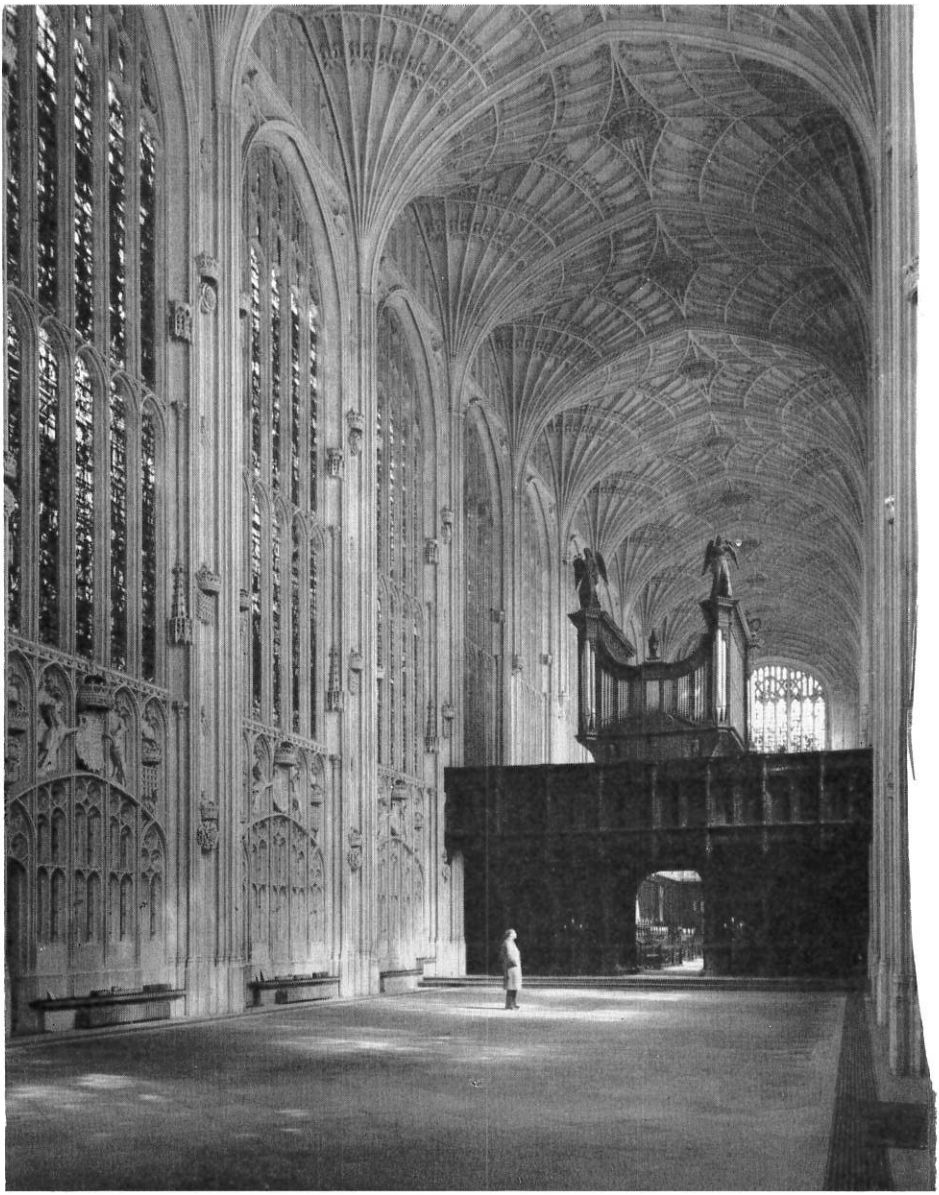
*COLOURS OFTEN USED*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Advent* | *Violet* | *Easter to Ascension* | *White* |
| *Christmas to Epiphany* | *White* | *Whitsuntide* | *Red* |
| *After Epiphany* | *Green* | *Trinity* | *White* |
| *3 Sundays before Lent* | *Violet* | *After Trinity* | *Green* |
| *Lent* | *Dull white* | *(Days of Apostles and Martyrs)* | *Red* |
| *Passiontide* | *Red* | | |

*Fig. 2 The Christian Year.*



1. The Vigil by J. Pettie



2. Interior of King's College Chapel, Cambridge

carry on his work on earth. In the early days Christians often had to face the possibility of execution unless they gave up their faith. Men who died for their faith were martyrs and formed the next group of saints to be recognised. As time went by and the persecution of Christians died away, the Church wished also to honour in this way those whose lives were of outstanding merit without ending in martyrdom. Because they confessed the faith of Christ, these saints were known as confessors.

In later times the Roman Catholic Church has recognised as saints only those who, after careful investigation, have been canonised (officially made saints) by the Pope. No new saints have been created in the Church of England since it broke away from the Church of Rome [1] and, as a result, no modern names appear in our Calendar. In many parts of the Anglican Communion overseas, the names of missionaries and other modern heroes of the Church are included. It is also true that, within the Church of England itself, many Christians are recognised as saints in their own localities although their names are not in the Calendar. In Devon and Cornwall, for example, you will find churches dedicated to saints whose names are little known elsewhere.

The last column of the Calendar as printed in this book shows the colour of the vestments and altar frontal for the various days, and the chart on page 6 also shows the colour of the various seasons. There are several colour schemes in use, some more elaborate than others, but those given are the colours most generally in use in parish churches.

*White*, the colour of purity, is used for the festivals of our Lord and his mother, and for Trinity Sunday. It

[1] But see pp. 81-2.

is also used for Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Harvest Thanksgiving.

*Red*, the colour of blood and of fire, is used for the feasts of apostles, evangelists and martyrs. It is also used during Whitsuntide to represent the tongues of fire seen on the first Whit Sunday.[1]

*Yellow* is the colour used for confessors, that is for saints who were not martyrs. Not many parish churches have yellow vestments, however, and the great majority use green on these feasts.

*Purple* is used during the seasons of prayer and preparation (Advent and Lent) which come before the great festivals of Christmas and Easter. Most churches have no black vestments, in which case purple is used for funerals.

*Lenten white*, an off-white colour, is used instead of purple in some churches during Lent. As Lent is the most solemn season, it is usual at this time to remove all flowers from the church, and to cover all crosses and ornaments with a veil of purple or Lenten white. As a general rule weddings are discouraged during this season, but this practice varies widely.

*Black* is used in some churches on Good Friday, and for funerals.

*Green*, the colour of nature, represents hope and growth, and is used on all occasions when no other colour is ordered.

The main framework of the services does not vary greatly throughout the year, but each great feast and each Sunday has its own particular portions, and we have seen that these consist of a special collect, epistle, and gospel, called the 'proper'. For Easter Day there is also the

[1] Acts 2.3.

Easter Anthem, which is sung instead of the *Venite* at Morning Prayer. The part of the service which does not vary from one season to another is called the 'ordinary'.

Attached to the Calendar in the Prayer Book is the Lectionary, or list of readings from the Bible to be used at Morning and Evening Prayer. The regular reading of the Scriptures has formed an important part of the worship of the Church of England for a very long time. At one time the lessons were so arranged that the whole of the Old Testament was read through once, and the New Testament (except the book of Revelation) twice, during the year.

The Lectionary has been revised on a number of occasions. The older readings, as printed in the Prayer Book, were based on the idea of daily services, and were unsatisfactory for people who went to church only on Sundays. The last revision came into use in 1957, and the new lessons are designed to be spread over a period of two years. The book of Psalms is not included in the Lectionary, since the Psalms are said or sung once each month in the ordinary course of the services.

# 2

# *Advent and Christmas*

MOST of us feel a thrill when we are sitting in a theatre just before the beginning of a play. Slowly the house lights dim and the orchestra's music fades. People settle in their seats and a great hush steals over the whole building. There is a tense feeling of excitement as the audience waits in the warm silence. Then —quite suddenly—the footlights glow, and the curtain sweeps up to reveal the brilliantly lit stage.

**Advent** is the first season of the Christian year when we wait, like a theatre audience, for the curtain to rise on the Christmas scene—the opening act of the great drama which unfolds itself year by year as the Church thinks and prays about one aspect after another of the Christian faith.

But you will hardly need to be reminded that Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas. In most homes Mother will already have made the puddings and cake in readiness and, as soon as Advent begins (on the Sunday nearest to November 30th), everybody realises that Christmas is not far away. The turkey and the Christmas tree are ordered, and we visit shop after shop in search of presents. Soon after the beginning of December the first Christmas cards begin to arrive, and shops,

streets, and houses are gay with trees and tinsel, paper chains and fairy lights.

Doesn't it seem strange that, amidst all this excitement and bustle, the Church regards Advent as a season of penitence?

The word Advent means 'coming', and at this time of the year we think about the coming of our Lord as a little baby almost two thousand years ago. At the same time we do not forget his second coming and that he has promised, as we say in the Creed, 'to come again in glory to judge both the quick (living) and the dead'.

People may tell you that they do not believe that our Lord will come again, and that there is no need to bother about such things. But the fact remains—and we are reminded of it each year at Christmastide—that God did once come to this world in a human form, and there is no reason to suppose that he will not return as he has promised, though not necessarily in a human form.

People have always considered it fitting to take especial care to prepare themselves thoroughly for any important event in which they are to take part, especially when those occasions are sacred. In olden times, before a man was made a knight he was given a bath as a sign that he intended to wash away all the misdeeds of his past life and to make a clean start. After that he spent the whole night in prayer before an altar on which his armour had been placed. This gave him time to think quietly about the solemn vows he was to make the next morning, and to ask God to help him to keep them. He was preparing himself for a new life.

If you were to be summoned to Buckingham Palace to meet the Queen, you would take great pains to make sure that you prepared yourself thoroughly—that you had the

right clothes, knew how to behave correctly, and so on. At Christmastide each year we are summoned to meet, not the Queen of England, but the King of the whole world. If you look at it in this way you will see that, although Christmas comes round year after year, it is really a very important event for every one of us, and we should take at least as much trouble to prepare for it as we should if we were going to meet an earthly monarch.

Let us go on thinking about it like this for a little longer. If you were to be received by the Queen you would want to go with an absolutely clear conscience. You would not want one of her courtiers to be able to step forward and say: 'Your Majesty, this man is wanted by the police for a crime which he has committed.' Still less would you want the Queen herself to be able to accuse you of something of which you were ashamed. So you would take care to put everything in order before you went.

Every year on **Christmas Eve** a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols is broadcast from the candle-lit chapel of King's College, Cambridge. In the beautiful bidding prayer which comes at the beginning of the service, we are reminded 'to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels and to go, in heart and mind, even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, and the Babe lying in a manger'.

That is exactly what we do each year during Advent: we prepare ourselves by telling God that we are sorry for all the wrongs we have done, and we ask him to forgive us so that we may go to the manger throne with our consciences free from trouble.

At the same time we remind ourselves that, when our Lord comes again, it will be to complete his work. No-

body knows when this will happen, but it will be a time when everyone will appear before him and the good and evil of his whole life will be judged by Christ himself.

For many people **Christmas** seems to pass very quickly. Most grown-ups are back at work within three or four days, and the children begin their new term at school soon after the twelfth day of Christmas. The parties are over and we settle down to the everyday business of our lives again. For the Church, however, the Christmas season lasts until the feast of Candlemas on February 2nd, forty days after Christmas Day itself.

You will sometimes hear Christmas called the Feast of the Nativity because it is the time when we celebrate the birth of our Lord. When God created the world he intended it to be a happy place. Pain, unhappiness, and every other form of evil—even death—have no place in God's plan for the world. They have been caused through mankind's sin and, if we are to understand Christmas properly, we must think about sin for a little while.

In the book of Genesis is the story of the Garden of Eden, a beautiful place full of trees and animals, where everyone was happy. Two people, a man and a woman, had been put by God into this garden to live there and enjoy it. There was only one condition: they were not allowed to eat the fruit of just one of the trees which grew there. One day they did so and, as a punishment, they were turned out of the garden and there has been unhappiness in the world ever since.

This is not a story which you are expected to believe word for word. It is an account, written many years ago, as one explanation of how sin and evil came into the world. It may seem to you that there was not much wrong in eating the forbidden fruit, but the important

truth of the story is that sin is nothing more or less than disobedience of one of God's commands. Since God is good, to disobey him is evil.

God did not despair of human beings. Time and time again he tried to persuade men to obey him. This was the message of the prophets to the Jewish people. Slowly, patiently, he worked, but men preferred to go their own ways, until at last there was only one thing left to do. Since men would not listen to God's messengers, he must come among them himself and live an ordinary life in an ordinary world. In this way he could show his purpose to mankind and save them from the tragedy in which the sins of generation after generation had involved every human being.

There is a story about a Caucasian chieftain who found that his military secrets were being betrayed to the Russians, against whom he was fighting. In the end, driven to despair by treachery and defeat, he ordered that anyone caught giving away secret information should be scourged. A few days later a traitor was brought to him—his own mother. What would you have done? For two days Schamyl sat in his tent fighting between his love for his mother and his love for his people. He had made the law; at one word from him his mother could be scourged, or set free.

At last he emerged from his tent and ordered the punishment to be inflicted—on himself. Schamyl had done nothing to deserve the cruel lashes, for the wrong was clearly his mother's. But he understood clearly why she had betrayed him and, because it was his mother, his grief was as great as if he had been guilty himself. His mother was so closely related to him that he felt as though he and the traitor were one, and he made himself com-

*Fig. 3 The Adoration of the Magi.*

pletely 'at one' with her by bearing her punishment. In so doing he shamed his mother and saved his tribe.

This illustrates part of the meaning of the Incarnation, the coming of God to the world. When all else had failed he made himself 'at one' with all men by sharing their life and living in a world made unhappy by sin but without sinning himself. Yet he suffered the same punishment as any ordinary criminal and so became 'at one' with even the worst of human beings. As Schamyl saved his tribe, so Jesus (his very name means 'Saviour') saved the whole human race.

Soon after his birth visitors came to see the infant. The first were Jewish shepherds, members of the same nation into which our Lord was born. But the baby was destined to be the saviour not just of one race, but of the

whole world. Twelve days after Christmas we celebrate the feast of the **Epiphany**, the showing of Christ to the Gentiles, or non-Jewish nations.[1] The Bible story of the coming of the wise men does not tell us their number, or that they were kings. But an old tradition says that they were three kings, representing the white, the yellow, and the coloured races. So representatives of the whole human race came to pay homage to the Saviour of the world, the King of kings.

The Epiphany is traditionally the end of the Christmas festivities, and in olden times Twelfth Night was the occasion of a great deal of revelling. But, as we have already seen, the Christmas season goes on for almost another month. Amongst the Jews in our Lord's day there was a custom that the first boy to be born in a family should be given to God when he was forty days old. Those who lived near enough were taken to the Temple in Jerusalem. When Jesus was taken, two old people recognised him as their Saviour,[2] and one of them, Simeon, praised God in the hymn called the *Nunc dimittis* (which we use in Evening Prayer), saying that he was happy to die now that he had seen the Saviour. For many years it was the custom to light candles during the singing of Simeon's hymn on **Candlemas Day** (February 2nd), the candles representing the coming of our Lord as the Light of the world, his own goodness shining like a beacon through the darkness of man's sin.

[1] The name *Epiphany* means 'manifestation' or 'showing forth'.
[2] St Luke 2.22–39.

# 3

# *Septuagesima to Eastertide*

FOLLOWING the Sundays after the feast of the Epiphany—which vary in number from year to year—come three with the rather curious names of **Septuagesima**, **Sexagesima** and **Quinquagesima**. This part of the Calendar is based on the date of Easter and the Sundays are nine, eight, and seven weeks before Easter Day. Quinquagesima means 'fiftieth', and is so called because it comes exactly fifty days before Easter. The names of the two others mean 'sixtieth' (Sexagesima) and 'seventieth' (Septuagesima) although, to be exact, they fall fifty-seven and sixty-four days before Easter. The three Sundays form a link between the festive season of Christmas and the more solemn time of Lent.

The Tuesday after Quinquagesima is called **Shrove Tuesday**. At one time, more than now, it was the custom for people to go to a priest on this day to confess their sins and receive pardon (that is, to be shriven) in preparation for Lent. It is the last day before the Lenten fast, and has long been marked in this country by the eating of pancakes.

**Lent** begins on Ash Wednesday, the day after Shrove Tuesday, and lasts for the remaining forty week-days before Easter. (Sunday, the weekly anniversary of the Resurrection, is never a fast.) The word Lent means

'Spring' and this season is so called from the time of the year when it occurs. The forty days of Lent commemorate the forty days of our Lord's fast in the wilderness. As time went by the sorrow for the sufferings of our Lord was extended to include sorrow for the sin which had made those sufferings necessary, and Lent has therefore become the most solemn season of penitence during the year.

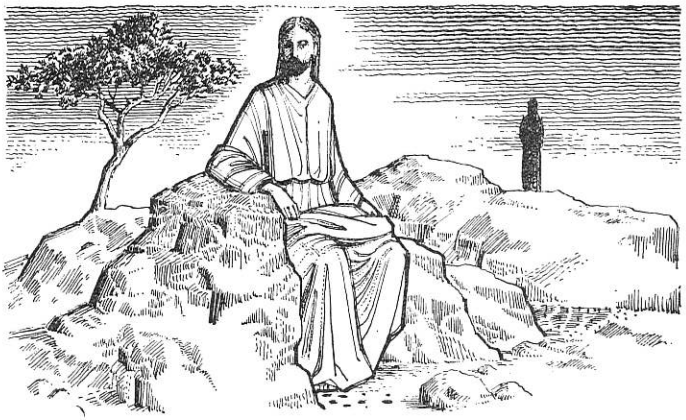


*Fig. 4 Our Lord's fast in the wilderness.*

The habit of fasting during Lent has varied widely from time to time and from place to place. At one time some Christians went without any food for considerable periods; others merely refrained from eating luxurious foods, some of the latter confining themselves to bread and water for the whole of Lent. In any case it was once a general rule that no food should be taken before the afternoon during Lent. Today the fast is less strictly observed, but many

people make some effort to give up some of their pleasures, and to give the money thus saved at this season for the work of the Church.

In all parts of the Church, Lent is still regarded as a season of special penitence and solemnity. In most churches the flowers are removed and the ornaments are covered. All festivities connected with the Church come to an end and, in general, it is a time when the gayer occupations of life are avoided.

The purpose of Lent is that it should provide us with an opportunity of showing our sorrow for our own sins, and that we should mark this by denying ourselves some pleasures. In this way we may be led to think more about the way in which God wants us to live, and so prepare ourselves for the greatest miracle of all—the Resurrection.

But just giving up our pleasures is not enough. At this time of the year we try to use all our energies to a better purpose, and the real reason for giving things up is that we may have more time and energy to spend on such habits as reading the Bible and prayer. It is good, too, to be able to give up quite deliberately some of the things which we enjoy. The time may come when circumstances will force us to do without them. If so, it will be much easier if we have never allowed our pleasures to rule us.

**Ash Wednesday** is so called because at one time it was the custom to sprinkle ashes on the heads of those who had been ordered to perform some public penance as a punishment for wrongdoing. In time this gave way to a more general penitence by the whole Church, and in some churches the foreheads of the congregation are marked with ashes made by burning palm leaves retained

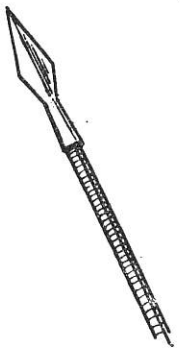
from the previous Palm Sunday. Ashes are a sign of penitence. A special service—the Commination Service—is provided in the Prayer Book, but it is now seldom used in full.

The fourth Sunday in Lent is variously known as **Mothering Sunday** or **Refreshment Sunday.** At one time young girls who had left home to work as domestic servants were allowed to pay a visit to their mothers on this day, and would take them a present, usually a simnel cake. United for the occasion, the family would worship together in the parish church, so that the Sunday became a recognition of our duty to Mother Church as well as to our own mothers. Those who lived near enough went to the cathedral, the mother church of the diocese.

Some people think that the name is older than this custom, and may be taken from the words, 'Jerusalem . . . which is the mother of us all', which occur in the epistle for the day. In any case, this Sunday has always been regarded as a break and time of refreshment in the Lenten fast, and the Gospel for the day is the story of the feeding of the five thousand by our Lord. In many parishes there is some form of social on the previous night, since a feast day begins at the time of Evensong on the eve of the feast.

**Passion Sunday** is the name given to the fifth Sunday in Lent, and marks the beginning of Passiontide which lasts until the day before Easter Day. During this time the worship of the Church is fixed on the sufferings which led up to our Lord's death—sufferings which have saved mankind from the consequences of the sin which caused them.

**Palm Sunday**, the sixth Sunday in Lent, is the first day of Holy Week, and the name commemorates the entry of our Lord into Jerusalem a week before his crucifixion. Then the people hailed him as their Saviour and the crowds threw palm leaves on the ground before him. The throwing down of the palms was much the same kind of welcome as we give today to a great man when we put down a red carpet for him to use when walking from his car to a building, or the ticker-tape welcomes which a popular hero receives in New York. Many churches are decorated with palms on this day, and small crosses of palm leaves are blessed and given to the congregation. The palm crosses are a reminder that, as our Lord was given a king's welcome when he came to Jerusalem, so he died on the cross a week later. As a further reminder that Palm Sunday really belongs to Passiontide the proper for the day deals with the story of the Passion, and not with our Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.



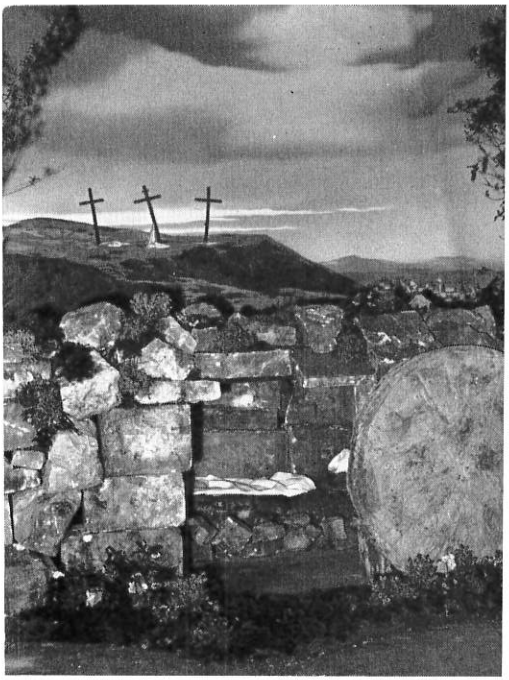
Proper collects, epistles and gospels are provided for each day of **Holy Week**, the most solemn part of all this solemn season, when the Church journeys with our Lord through his sufferings.

In England the Thursday of Holy Week is called **Maundy Thursday**. On this day oils are blessed in some cathedrals for use in parishes which desire them for anointing the sick. The day commemorates the washing of the disciples' feet by our Lord, when he performed for his followers one of the most menial tasks which could, in those days, have been required of any servant. Following from this, the custom grew up in many countries, of kings taking part in ceremonies which represented our Lord's act. It is recorded that Elizabeth I washed the

*Fig. 6 Jesus washing the disciples' feet.*

3. Pancake race at Olney, Bucks

4. The Distribution of the Royal Maundy



5. An Easter Sepulchre

6. Beating the Bounds at the Tower of London

feet of thirty-nine poor people at Greenwich Palace in 1572. Each year the Queen still distributes Maundy money—specially minted coins—to poor persons equal in number to the years of her age.

**Good Friday** is the anniversary of our Lord's crucifixion. The altars are stripped, black hangings and vestments are often used, and the day is kept as one of mourning for our Lord's death. In most churches there is no celebration of the Holy Communion, although the first part of the service is often used. In some nonconformist churches the day is kept less as a fast than as a feast in thanksgiving for our Lord's death, and on the Continent it is often a special day for the celebration of the Holy Communion. In most churches a special service, usually called the 'Three Hours' Devotion', is held from noon until three o'clock, the hours during which our Lord hung on the cross.

**Easter Day** is the greatest festival of the Church's year. Although, as we have already seen, each Sunday is a commemoration of the Resurrection, the annual feast of Easter is a special celebration of this event. In the early Church it was the occasion of the annual baptismal services. Coming, as it does, when the whole of nature is springing to life again after the winter, the return of the risen Lord from the grave is, essentially, a festival of life and its victory over death. The custom of exchanging Easter eggs is also associated with the coming of new life.

After the solemnity of Lent, the churches are bright on Easter Day. All the ornaments are replaced, the colour of the vestments and hangings is white, and the building is often gaily bedecked with lilies. In many churches an additional candle, the Paschal candle, will

burn at the north side of the sanctuary until Ascension Day. This is first lit in the darkness on Easter Eve to show that, as its light overcomes the darkness, so life triumphs over death. Often a model of the empty tomb, with figures of our Lord's friends, is richly decorated with flowers. This is called the Easter Garden.

The keynote of the Easter celebrations is joy—joy that our Lord, after spending forty hours in the tomb, rose again and conquered death. In this fact Christians see death not as the end, but as a gateway to a new life which is promised to them. The Easter festivities do not end on the day itself, but are kept up for forty days, the time which our Lord spent with his disciples between the time of his resurrection and his ascension. This is the period of **Eastertide**, the season of the triumph of life over death.

The date of Easter varies from year to year and is determined by the moon, as was the Jewish Passover, which was the occasion of our Lord's death. It is the day upon which almost all the other movable feasts of the Church depend, and may be as early as March 21st or as late as April 25th.

The fifth Sunday after Easter is commonly called **Rogation Sunday**, from the Latin word *rogare*, meaning 'to ask'. The three following days are also Rogation Days. This is the time when we pray for God's blessing on the harvest, remembering that, whatever we may do to prepare the earth and plant and care for the seed, there would be no crops if God did not send seasonable weather to allow them to grow and if he, as creator, had not put the germ of life in the seed.

About the year A.D. 470 the south of France was troubled by a series of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

*Fig. 7 The Resurrection—Jesus with Mary Magdalen.*

The city of Vienne suffered very badly, especially on Easter Eve, when the cathedral rocked during the saying of Mass. The congregation fled, leaving the saintly bishop (St Mamertus) alone at the altar. The bishop decided to set aside the three days before Ascension Day as special days of prayer against earthquakes and other dangers. These prayers were said in procession, and the custom spread to all parts of France. Later the rogations became associated particularly with prayers for the crops and the custom was later introduced into England.

At one time the whole congregation went round the parish, stopping at various points on the boundaries and in the fields to pray for the crops. In those days there were few maps and boundary stones could be easily moved, so the custom of 'beating the bounds' was often combined with the Rogationtide processions. Some of the boys in the party would be whipped with willow wands, or bumped on some of the boundary stones. It was thought that this was the best way of making them remember exactly the position of the boundaries of the village and the various farms. Plate VI shows a modern Rogationtide procession.

# 4

# *Ascension to the End of the Year*

AFTER his resurrection our Lord spent nearly six weeks with his disciples, trying to teach them just how their lives—and the lives of everyone else in the world—had been changed by his victory over death. This was no easy task, because for a long time they did not seem to understand at all clearly what he meant.

Then, one day, he led them from Jerusalem across the Kidron valley and up the slopes of the Mount of Olives, past the Garden of Gethsemane, where he had been arrested. When they reached the top he told them that they must return to Jerusalem, and wait until they received 'power from on high' to do the work which he had commanded them to do.[1] From that moment they saw him no more, and they returned to Jerusalem to await the promised power. Believing that he had returned to heaven, and that heaven is above the sky, they referred to this disappearance as the Ascension, the anniversary of which is still celebrated forty days after Easter.

**Ascension Day** is the only great festival of the Church which always falls on a week-day—as its date is fixed by Easter, it always comes on a Thursday. Eastertide is over and, in churches where it is used, the Paschal candle

[1] St Luke 24.49.

is put out after the Gospel at the principal celebration of the Holy Communion.

The disciples did not have to wait long for the coming of the promised power. Ten days later, when they were assembled in Jerusalem, they suddenly realised that they had received this power—the gift of the Holy Spirit. When men experience something which they cannot fully understand they often use picture language to describe it. For example, when you are suddenly frightened, you may say that your heart goes down into your boots. You know that it could not do that, but it feels like it. One Sunday evening, on May 24th, 1738, John Wesley

*Fig. 8 The first Whitsunday*

went to a service in Aldersgate Street, London. As the preacher read Martin Luther's introduction to the Epistle to the Romans, Wesley had a strange sensation which led him to spend the rest of his life trying to convert men to Christianity. Later, he wrote of that evening: 'I felt my heart strangely warmed within me.' We know that the temperature of his heart did not change, but that was the effect which the coming of the Holy Spirit seemed to have on him.

*Fig. 9 John Wesley.*

So it was when the disciples received the power which our Lord had promised them. In the Acts of the Apostles, St Luke says that, as they waited together, there was a sound like a rushing, mighty wind which filled the place where they were sitting. Then it seemed as though tongues of flame rested on the head of each of them.[1] It was the same kind of experience which John Wesley had in the Moravian chapel in the City of London. From that moment the apostles were not afraid to go out and to preach the good news of Jesus Christ. It was as though they had been set on fire—the kind of fire that nothing can quench. For this reason, on festivals connected with the Holy Spirit, of which **Whit Sunday** is the greatest, the colour of the vestments is red, the colour of fire.

You will sometimes hear the word Pentecost used for Whit Sunday. This name means 'fiftieth', and is

[1] Acts 2.1–13.

employed because it is the fiftieth day after Easter. It is usually thought that the name of Whit Sunday is a form of 'White Sunday'. The day was one of the most popular occasions for baptism in northern countries in times when it was always performed by total immersion, that is by dipping the person to be baptized completely under the water. Easter was often too cold for this purpose in these lands. As the candidates for baptism wore white robes, the day came to be known as White Sunday.

The Whit season lasts through the following week and at one time the next Sunday was included in it. Since the Middle Ages, however, the Sunday after Whit Sunday has been kept as **Trinity Sunday**. Thomas à Becket was consecrated as a bishop on that day, and it was he who ordered the feast to be observed in England. It was not until 1334 that it was generally commemorated elsewhere.

On Trinity Sunday the Church recognises God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three persons but one God. There is no simple way in which to explain this particular part of the Church's teaching. When St Patrick was in Ireland, he used a shamrock leaf with its three quite distinct parts which make up one leaf. Other people have tried to illustrate it by the three sides of a triangle. One of the most popular emblems of the Trinity consisted of three intertwined circles. Because it has neither beginning nor end, the circle is the sign of eternity. The three circles represent the three eternal Persons of the Trinity but, being intertwined, they cannot be separated.

The apostles were Jews and had been brought up to believe firmly that there is only one God, the creator of

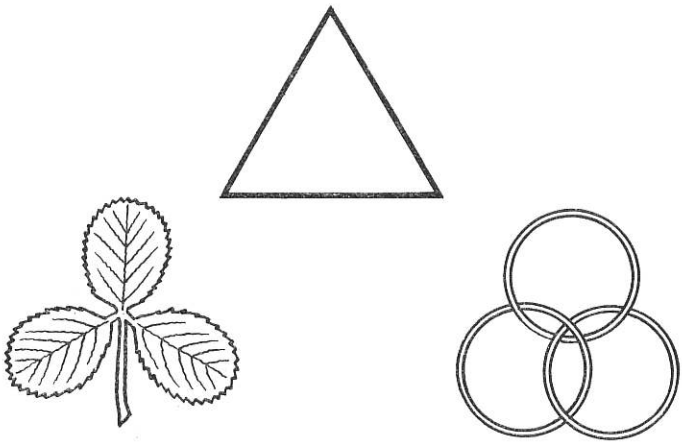


*Fig. 10 Emblems of the Trinity.*

the whole universe. They believed, too, that God is interested in what he has created and that, time and time again, he had acted quite deliberately in the affairs of men. Moreover, not once, but many times, he had inspired the prophets to tell men about himself, and how he wanted them to live. But the apostles also knew that something had happened in their lives which was quite different from anything which had ever occurred before. As they listened to their Master's teaching they began to realise that God himself had actually come to them, that Jesus of Nazareth was not only their companion but also their Lord, and that he loved them—and all men—as only God could love.

This explains why they were so sad when our Lord told them that he must leave them for good. At first they felt that they had been deserted, in spite of his promise to send them power from on high. Then,

quite suddenly, on the first Whitsuntide, they realised that they had received that power. As they had learned that Jesus did not remain in the grave but came back to them, now they knew that he had not just returned to heaven, but that he was risen and alive everywhere, working through the Holy Spirit to inspire men to do his will.

Thus they came to see that God is not just a distant being who lives far away from the earth, neither had he deserted men after living among them for thirty years or or so. They knew that God is threefold and eternal—Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

So on Trinity Sunday we worship God as Creator, who made the world and everything in it, including ourselves. We remember that he does not treat the world as a small child does a toy: he did not wind it up, set it going, and then go off to look at something else. Like a father—indeed, more than any earthly father—he cares for his children and, although he may sometimes allow them to get into scrapes of their own making, he is always ready to forgive them when they are really sorry for what they have done. Secondly, we worship God as Son, who came to earth in a human form, who lived among men, who went about doing good, who tried to tell us more about God and how he wants us to live, and—most of all—who made himself 'at one' with us by suffering the death of a criminal, although he had done no wrong. Through his suffering on the Cross he saved mankind from sin and, by uniting himself to man, he also made us 'at one' with God. Finally, we worship God as Holy Spirit who, now that God is no longer living among us in human form, strengthens us to do good. We are all rather like St Paul, who wrote: 'When I want to do good, I don't; and then I do

the wrong things that I want to leave alone.' There are times when all of us do wrong, there are times when we all do good. When we do good it is because, like John Wesley, our hearts have been strangely warmed within us by the Holy Spirit.

The Roman Catholic Church counts all the remaining Sundays of the year as 'Sundays after Pentecost', Trinity Sunday being the first. In the Church of England we reckon them, not from Whitsuntide, but as **Sundays after Trinity**. The exact number varies from year to year and depends on whether Easter is early or late, but, even though some of the others have to be missed out, the collect, epistle, and gospel for the twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity are always used for the Sunday next before Advent.

This last Sunday of the Christian year is often known as '*Stir up*' *Sunday*. This was not intended as a reminder to those who had forgotten to make their Christmas puddings in good time, but comes from the opening words of the collect: 'Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people. . . .' The Church's year is at an end and, as we prepare again for a new year to begin in Advent, we ask God to stir us to live that year as he would have us do.

Four groups of days appear in the Church's year, and may be mentioned here, although they do not strictly belong to any of the seasons. These are the **Ember Days** and consist, in each case, of the Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday following December 13th, the first Sunday in Lent, Whit Sunday, and September 14th. They are days of special prayer for those who are about to be ordained to the ministry of the Church.

Ordinations usually take place on the Sundays following

the Ember Days. The special prayers provided for these days ask God that only suitable men may be ordained to the ministry, that those who are being ordained may be prepared for their work, and that no parish may remain long without clergy. The theme of the Ember Days has been summed up in the slogan, 'Pray more for your clergy —pray for more clergy.'

We have now come to the end of the Church's year. It may be thought of in two parts, the earlier (from Advent to Trinity Sunday) containing all the great festivals of the Church. Spread through the year, however, are certain holy days which are observed on the same date each year unless, in certain years, a greater feast happens to fall on that date. It is therefore best to consider them in the order in which they occur in the Calendar. The next chapter is about the red-letter days which have their own 'proper' collect, epistle, and gospel. In Chapter 6 you will find that nothing has been written about some of the black-letter days. In many cases very little, if anything, is known about some of these black-letter saints, and many of the stories which are told of them are purely legendary. If you are particularly interested in one of the saints whose story does not appear in this chapter, you may care to look for him in a little book called *Saints and their Emblems in English Churches*.[1]

[1] By R. L. P. Milburn, published by Basil Blackwell, 1957.

# 5

# *The Red-Letter Days*

**30 November—St Andrew**

Little is know about the patron saint of Scotland, one of the Galilean fishermen whom our Lord chose among his disciples. He was the brother of St Peter (June 29th), and tradition says that he preached in Scythia, where he was crucified. Although his cross is always represented as X-shaped, there is nothing to suggest that he was actually crucified in this way. His connection with Scotland is based on the tradition that some of his bones were moved there in the eighth century. In the Church of England, St Andrew's Day is always observed as a day of prayer for missionaries and the world-wide mission of the Church. The feast fixes the beginning of the new Christian year, as the first Sunday in Advent is the Sunday nearest to November 30th, whether before or after. When that date falls on a Sunday, the feast of St Andrew is transferred to the following Tuesday.

**21 December—St Thomas**

Thomas was like so many people who say that 'seeing is believing'. After the Resurrection the apostles were gathered together, when Jesus appeared to them. They recognised him at once, but Thomas refused to believe that this was not a delusion unless he could see and touch the wounds made by the nails which had fastened our

Lord to the cross. Of course, he was wrong. Seeing is not believing, but knowing, and our Lord told him it is a much finer thing to believe than to know. Nothing certain is known of his later life, but tradition says that he was martyred in south India.

**25 December—The Nativity of our Lord, or the Birthday of Christ, commonly called Christmas Day**

No one is completely certain about the time of the year when our Lord was born. In the third century A.D. Clement of Alexandria mentioned May 20th as a possible date. In the western Church, December 25th seems to have been the date of the festival as early as A.D. 336, but in the east the birth of our Lord was connected with the feast of the Epiphany (January 6th), which was also observed as the anniversary of our Lord's baptism. The Armenian Church still observes January 6th. Christmas is more fully treated in Chapter 2.

**26 December—St Stephen**

The 'feast of Stephen' has always been associated with gifts. We remember that it was on this day that King Wenceslas set out with food and fuel to help an old man. In England, at one time, it was the custom for traders' roundsmen to go to the houses where they delivered goods in order to collect a 'Christmas box', and this accounts for the popular name, Boxing Day.

Stephen was one of 'the seven' selected by the apostles to help them in the distribution of alms to the widows and orphans of Christians. Although the word is not used of the seven men in Acts, it is usually held that they were the first deacons. At any rate, Stephen proved himself such a staunch supporter of the apostles that the enemies of the Church could not stand up against him in

*Fig. 11 The martyrdom of St Stephen.*

debate. He was hauled before the Sanhedrin, the council of the Jewish people, and accused of trying to overthrow the Law. In a long speech the prisoner accused his accusers, and showed that time and time again in history the Jews had ignored the warnings of the men of God. Finally, they had destroyed God's Son. Faced with these arguments, and unable to deny them, the councillors hurriedly condemned him to death and rushed him outside the city walls. Here he was stoned

whilst he prayed for those who were killing him. The execution was watched by Saul (later St Paul), who guarded the clothes of the executioners. Stephen was the first martyr of the Christian Church.[1]

**27 December—St John**

John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James [2] was one of the inner three of the apostles, who were with Jesus on certain special occasions. He is usually thought to be the 'disciple whom Jesus loved', who occupied the place of honour at the Last Supper. Later, he was imprisoned with St Peter. According to tradition he then went to Asia Minor, and was exiled to the island of Patmos because of his preaching of the Christian faith. Some traditions say that he lived to be a very old man, others that he was martyred with his brother at an early age. Even if he did not actually write the Gospel which bears his name, as some have thought, it is probable that the book contains his teaching and memories.

**28 December—The Innocents' Day**

When the wise men failed to return to Herod with news of where he might find the Christ-child, the king became both nervous and angry. He was afraid because the infant might grow up to overthrow him, and claim the throne for his own. Herod lived in days when treason was part and parcel of the life and death of kings; he ruled only by permission of the Roman emperor, and he knew that there were many people who were ready to plot against him. To the fear-ridden king there seemed only one way out, and he ordered the murder of all the children in Bethelehem under the age of two. By so doing he believed that he would make certain the death of him

[1] Acts 6.1–7.60. [2] 25 July.

7. The Mount of Olives

8. A Modern May Festival at Sir John Cass' Foundation School in the City of London

'who is born king of the Jews'. It was as well for Herod's peace of mind that he did not know that the child whom he really wished to destroy had been taken away to safety in Egypt.[1]

**1 January—The Circumcision of our Lord**

According to the Jewish Law boys were given their names on the eighth day after birth. 'And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus.' [2]

**6 January—The Epiphany of our Lord**

From the third century onwards, the Epiphany was commemorated in the eastern Church as the feast connected with our Lord's baptism. Also associated with our Lord's birth, it was one of the three principal festivals, and water to be used in baptisms throughout the year is still blessed on this day in the east. When the festival was first observed in the west the association with our Lord's baptism was dropped, and the Epiphany became more directly connected with the visit of the wise men to the infant Jesus.[3] The blessing of the baptismal water was then discontinued in the west. Each year the Queen makes an offering of gold, frankincense and myrrh in one of the Chapels Royal on this feast.

**25 January—The Conversion of St Paul**

As we have already seen, it is usual to commemorate a saint on the anniversary of his death. The feast of the apostle to the Gentiles, however, celebrates his conversion and not his martyrdom. Saul, as he was originally called, was born in the great seaport of Tarsus in Asia Minor. Quite early in life he became a leading Jew and was brought up as a strict Pharisee to keep every detail

[1] Matthew 2.13–18. [2] St Luke 2.21. [3] St Matthew 2.1–12.

of the Law. He finished his education in Jerusalem and soon became a vigorous persecutor of the Christians. He was present at the execution of Stephen (December 26th) and approved of his death. Having driven the Christians from Jerusalem, he secured a warrant from the High Priest to follow them to Damascus and continue his persecution there. As he approached the city he saw a brilliant light, and heard the words: 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Blinded by the experience, he was taken by his friends to Damascus, where he remained for three days in a Christian home, regained his sight and was baptised. After this he spent three years in Arabia, before returning to Damascus. At the end of this visit he had to leave the city secretly because of a plot against

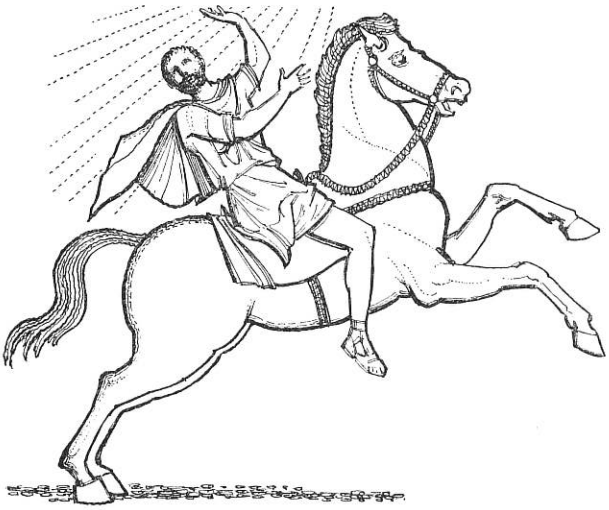


*Fig. 12 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?'*

his life. He returned to Tarsus for a while, and was brought from there to Antioch by Barnabas. The Church in Antioch then chose him to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and he set out on a series of journeys which took him to Cyprus, Asia Minor, and Greece. During a visit to Jerusalem he was arrested on false charges and, as a Roman citizen, he claimed his right to be tried by the emperor. On the way to Rome the ship in which he was travelling was wrecked on the island of Malta and the voyage had to be completed in another vessel. We do not know a great deal about what happened to Paul after his arrival in Rome, but he seems to have been kept under house arrest for two years before he was tried. An old tradition says that he was executed on the same day as Peter (June 29th) at a place called the Three Fountains, a short distance out of Rome. Paul was beheaded, unlike Peter, who, unable to claim Roman citizenship, was crucified. The New Testament contains thirteen letters which he wrote to various Churches and individuals.

### 2 February—Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, otherwise called the Presentation of Christ in the Temple

This feast, which is referred to in Chapter 2, commemorates the presentation of the Christ-child in the Temple.[1] For many years it was known in the east as 'The Meeting' (of Christ with Simeon). The feast occurs as the Purification in both the 1662 and 1928 Calendars, but the heading of the proper gives pride of place to the earlier and more accurate name.

### 24 February—St Matthias

By the treachery and suicide of Judas Iscariot, the number

[1] St Luke 2.21–3.9.

of the apostles was reduced to eleven. It was decided to fill the gap thus left with a man who had been a disciple from the beginning of our Lord's ministry.[1] Matthias was chosen, but we know nothing else about him. An old tradition says that he spent some time as a missionary in Abyssinia.

### 25 March—The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Three months before John the Baptist was born, the angel Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary to tell her that she was to have a son. At first Mary was surprised, but was reassured by the angel who told her that her child was to be the Son of God.[2] In the Middle Ages, Lady Day was the first day of the year.

### 25 April—St Mark

John Mark was the cousin of Barnabas (June 11th) and, possibly, the nephew of Peter (June 29th). He came from a Jewish Christian family in Jerusalem. Some people think that he may have witnessed the arrest of our Lord in the Garden of Gethsemane. In the Gospel according to St Mark there is a story about a young man who was present on this occasion. A soldier grabbed at the sheet in which he had wrapped himself, and the young man fled, naked.[3] This may be Mark's way of saying, without boasting: 'This is what happened, because I was there and saw it.' Later, he accompanied his cousin and Paul (January 25th) on their first missionary journey, but for some reason he turned back. As a result, Paul would not allow him to join them on the next journey. Some years later he seems to have been recon-

[1] Acts 1.15–26. [2] St Luke 1.26–38. [3] St Mark 14.51–52.

ciled with Paul and was in Rome with him and Peter. The Gospel which bears Mark's name was probably written at this time and based on Peter's memories of our Lord. According to one tradition, Mark became the first bishop of Alexandria, whilst another account associates him with Venice, of which city he is the patron saint.

### 1 May—St Philip and St James

Philip was one of the twelve apostles. The gospels tell us little about him, apart from the fact that he brought Nathanael to Jesus as a disciple, and that he was present at the feeding of the five thousand.[1] Of his later life we know nothing for certain, but tradition says that, with two of his daughters, he settled in Asia Minor and was crucified there at the age of eighty-seven.

James the Less was the head of the Church of Jerusalem, and is described in the New Testament as 'the Lord's brother'. It was said that he spent so much time in prayer that his knees became hardened, like those of a camel. He was possibly the writer of the epistle which bears his name and which stresses the importance of Christian behaviour. Charged with breaking the Jewish Law, he is reputed to have been hurled from a pinnacle of the Temple but, surviving the fall, was killed with a club.

*Fig. 13 St Philip.*

May Day was a time of great festivity in the Middle Ages. The winter was over and, since fires were also at an

[1] St John 1.43–51; 6.1–13.

end, it was especially the holiday of the sweeps. The choosing of a May Queen to preside over the revels, dancing round the maypole, games, and plays marked the day.

**11 June—St Barnabas**

Barnabas was the cousin of John Mark (April 25th) and was a Cypriot Jew. He spoke on behalf of Paul (January 25th) when the apostles were afraid that the conversion near Damascus was only a trick to gain more knowledge of the Christians so that Paul could persecute them more efficiently. Later, Barnabas went to Antioch, and it was to help the Church there that he paid a visit to Tarsus to bring Paul to Syria so that he could help the growing Church in Antioch. When the Church at Antioch decided to send missionaries into Asia Minor, it was Barnabas and Paul who were given the difficult task of converting the Gentiles. Mark also accompanied them on their first journey but, for some unknown reason, he did not stay the course. Later, when Barnabas wished to forgive his cousin, Paul refused to give him another start, and the apostles separated. Barnabas returned to Cyprus with Mark, and tradition says that he was burnt to death there.

*Fig. 14 St. Barnabas.*

**24 June—The Nativity of St John the Baptist**

Like the Conversion of St Paul (January 25th), this is one of the rare occasions when a saint is not commemo-

rated on the day of his death. The Baptist, however, has a black-letter commemoration of his murder by Herod Antipas (August 29th). John was the son of a Jewish priest named Zacharias, and his wife Elisabeth, who was a cousin of the Virgin Mary. As a young man John appeared on the banks of the River Jordan, calling the Jewish people to repent and to be baptised as a sign that they wanted to wash away their sins. Large crowds came to listen and to submit to his baptism, amongst them our Lord himself. John soon recognised that Jesus was indeed the Christ, and he understood that he himself was merely preparing the way for a greater prophet. Later, John rebuked Herod Antipas for stealing his brother's wife. Herod quickly imprisoned the Baptist. At a banquet in the fortress of Machaerus, high amid the frontier mountains overlooking the Dead Sea, the plot was laid. Queen Herodias and her daughter Salome, neither of whom had forgiven John for his attack on the king's marriage, tricked Antipas into a position where he was compelled to give the order for the Baptist's death.[1]

St John the Baptist's Day is Old Midsummer Day which, like Twelfth Night and May Day, was the occasion of much revelry in England in olden times.

**29 June—St Peter**

Peter, with James (July 25th) and John (December 27th) was one of the inner group of disciples who were closest to our Lord, and who were chosen to be with him on special occasions such as the Transfiguration. A fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, he was called to be one of the first disciples, and in some ways he seems the most easily understood of the men who travelled with our Lord. It was he who was the first to recognise Jesus as the Christ;

[1] St Luke 1.5–23, 57–80; St Mark 6.17–29.

*Fig. 15 St James.*

it was he who denied our Lord three times on the night of his greatest peril. For a time after the Ascension he was the leader of the Church in Jerusalem, but this position was later occupied by James the Less (May 1st). According to tradition Peter then went to Antioch and later to Rome, where he became bishop of the Church in that city. He is said to have suffered martyrdom on the same day as Paul (January 25th), being crucified head downwards because he said he was not worthy to suffer the same death as his Master. Tradition says that his body is buried under the high altar of St Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

### 25 July—St James the Great

James and John (December 27th) were the sons of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman who was wealthy enough to be able to employ servants. Like Peter (June 29th), he was one of the disciples who were closest to our Lord. He was the first of the apostles to suffer martyrdom, being beheaded by Herod Agrippa a few years after the Crucifixion.[1] Tradition says that his disciples placed his body in a boat without rudder or sail, and allowed themselves to

*Fig. 16 St Peter.*

[1] Acts 12.1–2.

drift until they reached the coast of Spain. There his body was buried at Compostella, which became one of the greatest shrines of the Middle Ages. James is the patron saint of Spain.

**24 August—St Bartholomew**

Tradition has identified him with Nathanael, who was brought by Philip to Jesus.[1] No fewer than 165 English churches are dedicated to this saint about whom little is known. He is said to have become a missionary to India, where he miraculously overthrew idols in such numbers that the heathen priests complained to the king. He was arrested and flayed to death.

**21 September—St Matthew**

Matthew was a tax-collector who was called by our Lord to forsake his livelihood and become a disciple.[2] According to tradition he decided, before leaving Palestine, to write a Gospel which included his account of our Lord's life. This was based on the outline of St Mark's Gospel which, in turn, included the teaching of Peter. This does not mean that the Gospel according to St Matthew as it stands today is the work of the tax-collector —more probably it contains material compiled from his notes. He is said to have gone to Abyssinia at a later stage, and was put to death there for opposing the king's marriage.

**29 September—St Michael and All Angels**

Nearly seven hundred English churches are dedicated to the archangel. He first appears as the protector of the Jewish people in the Old Testament book of Daniel. Twice in the New Testament he is depicted as the heavenly champion of the Church against the heathen and

[1] St John 1.43–51. [2] St Matthew 9.9–13.

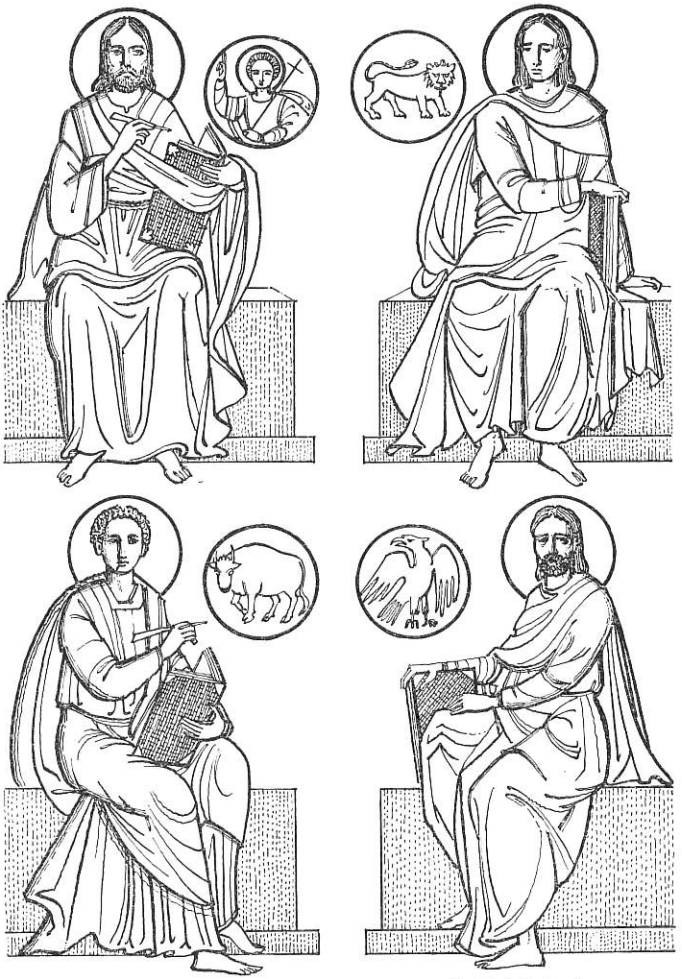
as the protector of the individual Christian against evil. He is usually represented as a winged angel, striking with his sword at a dragon who represents the devil.

*Fig. 17 St Paul dictating to St Luke.*

**18 October—St Luke**

The author of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles was a doctor who accompanied St Paul on some of the later stages of his journey. He must have learned much of what he knew of our Lord from the great apostle himself. Tradition says that he was also an artist. He was with St Paul during the latter's imprisonment in Rome,[1] but nothing is known of the beloved physician's later life and the stories of his martyrdom are legendary. The Gospel according to St Luke is

[1] 2 Timothy 4.9–18.



St Matthew (a man)
St Luke (an ox)

St Mark (a lion)
St John (an eagle)

*Fig. 18 The four Evangelists and their emblems.*

based on St Mark's outline, but the author has made many additions, including some of the most beautiful and popular stories which appear nowhere else. Examples of these are the parables of the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son, and the account of the two disciples walking with our Lord to the village of Emmaus on the evening of the Resurrection.

**28 October—St Simon and St Jude**

Simon 'the Zealot' was a member of a Jewish revolutionary party before he became a disciple. It is possible that he was a cousin of our Lord, but this is not certain.

Jude was the brother of St James the Less (May 1st). Tradition says that, after Simon had spent some time in Egypt, he and Jude went to Persia, where they overthrew so many idols that the enraged priests hewed them in pieces.

**1 November—All Saints' Day**

This, the last red-letter day of the Christian year, sums up the teaching which is to be found in the stories of all the saints. Its real intention is to commemorate all those, known and unknown, who have tried to follow our Lord and to live as he would have wished. The Church has always recognised that the saints who are known by name, and included in the Calendar, form but a tiny number of those who have led saintly lives. On this day we remember that all Christians of every race and century are gathered together in devotion to one Lord.

# 6

# *The Black-Letter Days*

ALTHOUGH for convenience all the black-letter days have been listed in this chapter, you will find that nothing has been written about some of them. Little is known about some of these saints, and many of the stories which are told of them are nothing more than legends which have grown up in the course of time.

**6 December—St Nicholas**

Many legends are told of this Bishop of Myra in Asia Minor, the patron saint of children, sailors, and pawnbrokers. The early form of his name was Santa Niklaus and it is easy to see how this has changed to 'Santa Claus'. Churches dedicated to him are often built near the coast, where their towers may guide sailors through the sandbanks.

*Fig. 19 St Nicholas.*

**8 December—Conception of the Virgin Mary**

This feast was first observed in the seventh century, and adopted into the English Calendar about 1040.

**13 December—St Lucy**

Lucy was a martyr at Syracuse in Sicily.

**16 December—O Sapientia**

These Latin words mean 'O Wisdom . . .' and are the opening words of the anthem once sung on this day. The hymn 'O come, O come, Emmanuel' is based on the special anthems once used each day from December 16th to the day before Christmas Eve.

**31 December—St Silvester**

Silvester was Bishop of Rome in the fourth century.

**8 January—St Lucian**

**13 January—St Hilary**

Hilary was Bishop of Poitiers, in France, and was one of the greatest scholars of his age.

**18 January—St Prisca**

Prisca was a Roman martyr.

**20 January—St Fabian**

Fabian was Bishop of Rome, and did a great deal to reorganise the Church in that city. He was beheaded in A.D. 250.

**21 January—St Agnes**

**22 January—St Vincent**

Vincent was a deacon at Saragossa in Spain.

**3 February—St Blasius**

Popularly known as Blaise, this saint was a favourite in England when the country's wealth depended on the wool trade, as he was the patron saint of wool-combers.

**5 February—St Agatha**

**14 February—St Valentine**

The connection of this saint with the sending of 'valentines' by lovers arises from an old superstition that all birds mated on this day. Two quite different saints share this day as the date of their martrydom, both named Valentine. One was a British bishop, the other a Roman priest.

**1 March—St David**

No account of the life of the patron saint of Wales was written until five hundred years after his death. He is said to have founded a monastery at St Davids in Pembrokeshire, where he yoked his monks to their ploughs in place of oxen. He became Archbishop of Wales, and died about A.D. 590.

**2 March—St Chad**

Chad was born in Northumbria, but was brought up in Ireland. After being trained at Lindisfarne by St Aidan (August 31st), he became Abbot of Lastingham, and Bishop of York. Later he went to the Midlands, and built a new cathedral at Lichfield. A saintly, energetic man, he travelled on foot until the archbishop ordered him to use a horse. He died in A.D. 672.

**7 March—St Perpetua**

*Fig 20. 'Not Angles but Angels'.*

**12 March—St Gregory the Great**

Gregory, after being prepared for a career in politics, became a monk, and served two popes as their representative in Constantinople. He was chosen as Bishop of Rome against his own wishes, but, having been appointed, he tackled the work with tremendous energy. He was anxious to help the poor, and was prepared to sell church plate to buy food for the starving people of Rome. He did much for Jews and slaves, two groups of people who were often oppressed. The story goes that, as he was walking through the market-place at Rome one day, he saw some Yorkshire lads for sale as slaves. On asking to what nation they belonged, he was told that they were Angles. Looking at their fair hair and blue eyes, Gregory murmured: 'Not Angles but Angels.' From that time he hoped to conduct a mission to England himself, but, as this was impossible, he sent St Augustine (August 28th) in his place.

**18 March—St Edward, King of the West Saxons**

Edward was killed by order of his stepmother at Corfe Castle, in Dorset, in A.D. 978.

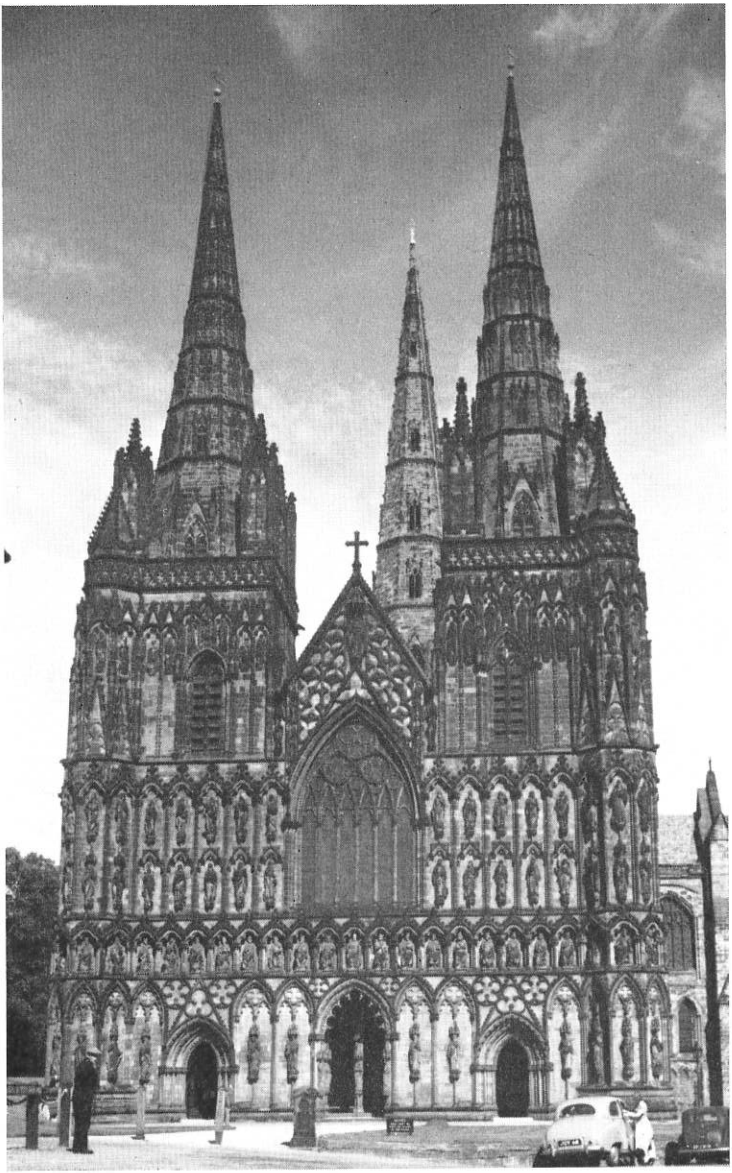
**21 March—St Benedict**

Of noble birth, Benedict became a hermit and soon gained such a reputation for saintliness that he was asked to become abbot of a near-by monastery. Finding it difficult to control so great a number of monks, he returned to his hermit's cave and established twelve groups of twelve monks from among his disciples. He later formed a small monastery at Monte Cassino, where he remained from A.D. 525 until his death about twenty-five years later. He drew up careful rules for his monks to follow, and these have been the model on which most monks have since modelled their lives.

9. Two Modern Heroes of the Church

Edward King

William Temple



10. Lichfield Cathedral

**3 April—St Richard of Chichester**

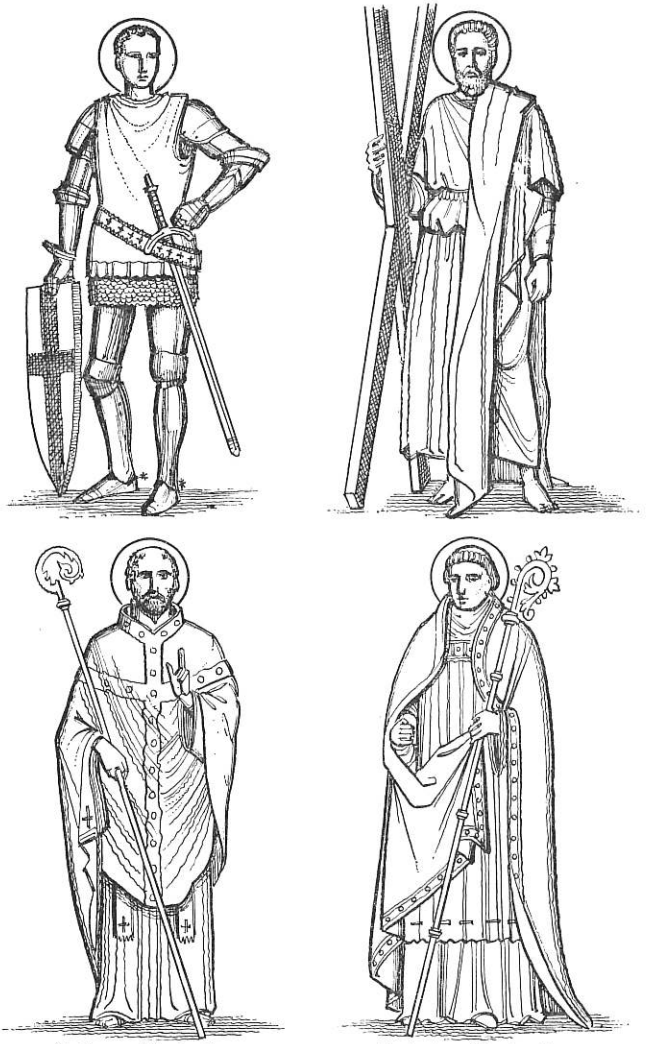
Born of wealthy parents who died when he was young, Richard worked for a time on his brother's farm. After studying at three great universities, he became, in turn, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, and Chancellor of Canterbury. For a while he was exiled with the Archbishop of Canterbury, but soon after his return he became Bishop of Chichester. He did a great deal to help the poor, and died in A.D. 1253 after a long preaching tour in support of the Crusades.

**4 April—St Ambrose**

Trained as a lawyer, Ambrose became a magistrate at Milan in northern Italy. In A.D. 374 a new bishop was to be elected, and Ambrose went to the cathedral to make sure there would be no rioting. Suddenly the cry, 'Let Ambrose be bishop!' went up, and the magistrate found himself elected, even though he had not then been baptised, and did not wish to give up his profession. A brilliant scholar, organiser, and poet, he became an excellent bishop after this rather unusual start. One of his converts to Christianity was St Augustine (August 28th). He was afraid of no man, and even barred the Emperor Theodosius from receiving the Holy Communion because of his part in the slaughter of seven thousand people in Thessalonica. Ambrose is usually shown carrying a beehive. It is said that, as he lay in his cradle, a swarm of bees settled on his mouth and flew away without harming him. Because of this, and the beauty of his hymns and sermons, Ambrose has become known as the 'honey-mouthed'.

**19 April—St Alphege**

Successively Abbot of Bath, Bishop of Winchester, and Archbishop of Canterbury, Alphege was captured by the



St George (England)
St Patrick (Ireland)

St Andrew (Scotland)
St David (Wales)

*Fig. 21 Patron Saints of the British Isles.*

Danes and imprisoned at Greenwich. He refused to allow the Church to buy his life with some of its treasures, and was stoned and beheaded in A.D. 1011.

**23 April—St George**

The traditional story of England's patron saint says that he saved a princess from a dragon which was terrorising her father's city. One girl had to be sacrificed to the beast each day, and George arrived on the scene as the princess had just been chosen by lot for this purpose. The saint wounded the dragon with his spear, subdued it, and led it to the city where he cut off its head. Fifteen thousand men became Christians as a result of this feat. George was later tortured and put to death for refusing to sacrifice to idols.

It is now more generally accepted that he was a Roman soldier who refused to sacrifice to the emperor, and was put to death at Lydda, in Palestine, in A.D. 361. Quite close to Lydda is the town of Joppa which is the traditional scene of the killing of the gorgon, Medusa, by Perseus. The Greek legend and the Christian martyr have probably been confused to produce the story of George and the dragon.

George has not always been the patron saint of England; at one time this position was conceded to Edward the Confessor. During the Crusades, English soldiers in Palestine must have heard much of George, and they prayed to him before going into battle after Richard I had seen a vision of the saint.

**3 May—The Invention of the Cross**

This feast commemorates the legendary finding by St Helena of the cross on which our Lord was crucified. Tradition says that Helena was a British princess, the daughter of Coilus (Old King Cole of the nursery rhyme),

who lived near Colchester. She was married to a Roman soldier named Constantius who was stationed in Britain. When her husband became emperor he divorced Helena, but their child became the Emperor Constantine the Great, under whose guidance Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. At the age of seventy Helena set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where she discovered our Lord's cross. The borough arms of Colchester commemorate this event. This picture of St Helena is the first letter of the charter granted to the town by Henry V in 1413, and bears the inscription, 'Colchester is the birthplace of Helena whom the Cross makes glorious'.

**6 May—St John ante Portam Latinam**

The feast of St John before the Latin Gate commemorates the traditional casting of the apostle into a cauldron of boiling oil outside one of the city gates of Rome. The feast is often used as the national festival by churches dedicated in the name of this saint, rather than the red-letter feast on December 27th, as that date falls so near to Christmas Day.

**19 May—St Dunstan**

Dunstan was one of the many churchmen of earlier times who held high office both in Church and State. Successively Abbot of Glastonbury, Bishop of Worcester, Bishop of London and Archbishop of Canterbury, he was also chancellor to King Edred. Famed not only for his knowledge and his organising ability,

*Fig. 22 St Dunstan.*

he was also well known as a musician and a goldsmith. He was extremely strict with his clergy and monks. Dunstan died in A.D. 988.

**26 May—St Augustine, Archbishop of Canterbury**

This Roman monk was sent to Britain by his friend Gregory (March 12th) in A.D. 597, with the task of converting the people of these islands to Christianity. Within a short time the king became a Christian and presented the missionaries with a ruined villa which they rebuilt as a church. In the following year Augustine visited Gaul where he was consecrated as the first Archbishop of Canterbury. By the time of his death, in A.D. 604, he had also established the dioceses of London and Rochester.

**27 May—The Venerable Bede**

At the age of eight Bede was admitted to the monastery at Jarrow, and knew no other home for the remaining fifty-four years of his life. A man of saintly character and extraordinary knowledge, he was a tireless worker and the whole of his life was spent in study and writing. He compiled a history of the Church in England, lives of the saints and martyrs, and a translation of books of the Bible. His translation of the Gospel according to St John was completed on Ascension Day, A.D. 735, the day on which he died.

**1 June—St Nicomede**

**5 June—St Boniface**

Born at Crediton in Devon, Boniface is known as the 'Apostle of Germany'. His first visit to the Continent was made when he was thirty-five years old, and was not very successful. Two years later he went to Rome and, having received the Pope's authority, he returned to Germany where he worked with a great deal of success.

He was created Bishop, and later Archbishop, of Mainz, and he founded many schools and monasteries. Even the king regarded him as his most valued adviser. Towards the end of his life he resigned his important office and returned to northern Germany to work once again as a missionary. He was martyred in A.D. 754.

**17 June—St Alban**

Alban, said to be the first British martyr, was a soldier who was converted to Christianity by a Welshman. According to one tradition he refused to sacrifice to the Roman gods, and was beheaded in the city which now bears his name. Another story says that he took the place of a British priest whom the Roman soldiers came to arrest.

**20 June—Translation of St Edward, King of the West Saxons**

This feast commemorates the removal of the body of King Edward (March 18th) from Wareham to Shaftesbury.

**2 July—Visitation of the Virgin Mary**

After she had received the promise of the angel that she was to become the mother of our Lord, Mary went to see her cousin, Elisabeth.[1]

**4 July—Translation of St Martin**

In the year A.D. 478 the body of Martin (November 11th) was removed from Candé, where he died, to Tours Cathedral.

**15 July—St Swithun**

This is also the feast of a translation, the removal of a saint's body. Swithun, who was Bishop of Winchester, ruled his diocese well. He travelled on foot and by night to avoid any ceremony; he repaired roads and

[1] St Luke 1.39–56.

*Fig. 23 St Swithun.*

bridges, built churches, and kept accurate records of events in his diocese. On his death in A.D. 862, he left instructions that his body was to be buried outside the cathedral, and this wish was carried out. Just over a century later, the cathedral authorities decided to move the body to a rich shrine inside the church and, according to tradition, heavy rains marked the Bishop's displeasure and held up the work for forty days. The superstition that rain on St Swithun's Day brings continuous rain for forty days is based on this story.

**20 July—St Margaret**

The legend of this saint tells that she was the daughter of pagan parents, but became a Christian through the influence of her nurse. The Roman governor of Antioch in Asia Minor wished to marry her but, discovering that she was a Christian, handed her over to the torturers. Whilst in prison she refused to deny her faith and her example helped many others to become Christians. She was beheaded about the year A.D. 278.

**22 July—St Mary Magdalen**

In the 1928 Prayer Book this was made a red-letter feast, and is dealt with on page 70.

**26 July—St Anne**

This is the feast of the mother of the Virgin Mary. Nothing, apart from legends, is known of her.

**1 August—Lammas Day**

In Old Testament times it was the custom to bring

the first-fruits of the harvest and present them in the Temple. Lammas Day has long been observed in England, and a reference to it is to be found in the writing of King Alfred. The word 'Lammas' comes from the original name 'Loaf mass' because, on that day, loaves were baked from the new corn and taken to church to be consecrated. It is the traditional harvest festival of the Church. It is also the feast of St Peter ad Vincula (St Peter in Chains), commemorating the story in Acts 12, of the delivery of St Peter from prison. One of the chapels of the Tower of London is consecrated to the memory of this event.

**6 August—The Transfiguration of our Lord**

In the 1928 Prayer Book this, in common with the other feasts of our Lord, has been made a red-letter day, and is considered on page 70.

**10 August—St Laurence**

In A.D. 258 the prefect of Rome attempted to rob the Church of its treasure, and demanded that Laurence, a deacon, should produce it. To the prefect's intense annoyance Laurence appeared bringing, not the expected gold and silver plate, but a number of poor persons, saying: 'These are the treasure of the Church.' He was arrested and roasted to death on a gridiron.

**28 August—St Augustine, Bishop of Hippo**

Augustine's wild youth gave no indication of the saintly character which was to develop later. The son of a pagan father and a Christian mother, he was educated in the University of Carthage. Converted to Christianity, he was baptised at the age of thirty-three through the influence of his mother and St Ambrose (April 4th). He returned to Africa, and argued fiercely with any who sought to destroy the Church's teaching. Two of his

books, the *Confessions* and the *City of God*, are among the finest Christian writings outside the New Testament. He died in A.D. 430.

**29 August—The Beheading of St John the Baptist**

The story of the Baptist has already been told among the red-letter days on page 44.

**1 September—St Giles**

The legend of Giles records that he travelled to France from his birthplace in Greece and, having become famed for his miracles, he went to live in a remote forest as a hermit. His cave was shared with a hind which supplied him with milk. When the king's huntsmen chased the hind, Giles drove off the hounds with prayer, and refused the king's offer of medical help for a wound in his leg. Later he became the abbot of a French monastery. Because of his injury, he has become the patron saint of the lame, and the parish of St Giles, Cripplegate, in London, was at one time the resort of many cripples who used to beg at the city gate there.

**7 September—St Enurchus (Evurtius)**

**8 September—Nativity of the Virgin Mary**

The mother of our Lord has always been the most highly regarded of all the saints honoured by the Church, although the Church of England has never accorded her the almost divine position which she has in the Church of Rome. The daughter of Joachim and Anna (July 26th), she was dedicated from birth by her parents, who presented her in the Temple at the age of three. She was present at the Crucifixion, and remained with the apostles in Jerusalem after the Ascension.

**14 September—Holy Cross Day**

This day commemorates the exhibition of the true cross in Jerusalem in A.D. 629 after it had been recovered from

the Persians who had captured it fifteen years earlier.

**17 September—St Lambert**

Lambert was Bishop of Maestricht, but was later expelled, and entered a monastery. On the king's death he was restored, and set an example to all his people. His supporters killed two brothers who had plundered the church in Maestricht. In revenge, the brothers' relatives burst into the Bishop's house and murdered everyone they found, including Lambert himself.

**26 September—St Cyprian**

Cyprian was a lawyer at Carthage in north Africa, but gave up his career when he became a Christian. Elected archbishop, he left Carthage during a persecution, and on his return had to deal with the difficult problem of those who had denied their faith when faced with danger. He set a high example by his care of the sick during an outbreak of plague. When the persecution was renewed, Cyprian was at first exiled, but in the following year (A.D. 258) he was recalled and beheaded.

**30 September—St Jerome**

Baptised in Rome, Jerome joined a small group who had devoted their lives to the study of the Scriptures. Later he lived in Antioch, after which he spent four or five years in the desert learning Hebrew. He was ordained on his return to Antioch, and then spent some time in Constantinople and Rome. Later he visited Antioch, Egypt, and Palestine, finally settling in Bethlehem, where

*Fig. 24 St Jerome.*

he ruled the monastery and devoted himself to study. His great contribution to Christian literature was the translation of the Bible into Latin (the *Vulgate*). Jerome's new translation formed the basis of many later versions of the Scriptures in many languages. He died in A.D. 420, thirty-five years after he had settled in Bethlehem.

**1 October—St Remigius**

**6 October—St Faith**

Tradition says that when the Christians of Aquitaine hid from persecution about the year A.D. 304, Faith, still a little girl, stayed behind and was roasted to death on a brass bedstead. Her example shamed those who had fled, and the Bishop led his people back to suffer martyrdom. The story is a good illustration of the way in which even a child's example may lead others to stand firmly in the face of danger.

**9 October—St Denys**

Nothing but tradition remains around the name of the patron saint of France.

**13 October—Translation of St Edward, King and Confessor**

Last of the Anglo-Saxon kings and founder of Westminster Abbey, Edward preferred the life of a monk to that of a king. He was famed for his humility and saintliness, as well as for his prophecies of the disasters which would overtake England after his death. He is also credited with being able to cure the sick and the blind. The abbey was consecrated shortly before the king's death in January 1066. His body was moved to its present shrine behind the high altar on October 13th, 1163. Until St George became popular during the Crusades, Edward was the patron saint of England.

**17 October—St Etheldreda**

Popularly known as Audrey, Etheldreda was the daughter of an East Anglican king. Married twice, she received the Isle of Ely in the middle of the Fens as a wedding present from her first husband. Encouraged by Wilfrid, Archbishop of York, she left her second husband and founded a convent there. After her death in A.D. 679, her shrine became the greatest in East Anglia.

**25 October—St Crispin**

Crispin, who is linked with his brother Crispinian in the 1928 Prayer Book, is said to have been a Roman who lived in France, where he gained a reputation for cobbling. The brothers worked without payment, and spent their spare time preaching.

**6 November—St Leonard**

**11 November—St Martin**

The story is told that Martin, who was trained as a soldier, was once approached by a beggar who asked for alms outside the gates of Amiens. Having no money, Martin took his sword and, cutting his military cloak in two, gave half to the beggar. That night our Lord appeared to him in a vision, wearing the half-cloak. Martin then left the army and became a Christian. He did not wish to become Bishop of Tours and, after his election, continued to live strictly in his monastery, leaving it only to visit his diocese on preaching tours. He died in A.D. 397, and his body was later moved to Tours (July 14th).

**13 November—St Britius**

**15 November—St Machutus**

**17 November—St Hugh**

A French monk, Hugh came to England as prior of a monastery in Somerset, later being consecrated as Bishop

of Lincoln. In the days following the death of Thomas à Becket, Hugh valiantly maintained the privileges of the Church against the royal power. Hugh never lost his love for the priory at Witham which he had built up for Henry II, and he always remembered that he had been a monk. Every year the Bishop left his cathedral in Lincoln to journey across the country to Somerset, where he spent time in prayer. His church at Witham remains to this day. He died whilst returning from a mission to France in 1200.

**20 November—Edmund, King of the East Angles**

Defeated in battle, Edmund was captured by the Danes but he refused to share his kingdom with the pagan invaders. He was tied to a tree and used as a target for archery practice, after which he was beheaded. King Canute later moved his body to Bury St Edmunds.

**22 November—St Cecilia**

Cecilia is the patron saint of music. Nothing certain is known of her life.

**23 November—St Clement**

Possibly an ex-slave, Clement was Bishop of Rome at the close of the first century. He left behind him an epistle which is of particular interest as it refers in detail to the ministry of the Church at his time.

**25 November—St Catherine**

The story that Catherine was martyred by being bound to a spiked wheel has given its name to the popular form of firework named after her. The legend records that she was a wealthy lady of Alexandria who set a high example by her piety, courage, and life. When the tyrant Maximin wished to marry her, she refused and was bound to spiked wheels. These were miraculously shattered, after which she was taken outside the city and beheaded.

# 7

# *The Prayer Book Calendar of 1928*

THE saints mentioned in the last two chapters are those whose names appear in the Calendar attached to the Prayer Book of 1662. As we have already seen, the commemoration of a saint was usually local at first, and it was some considerable time before individual saints, apart from those of the New Testament, were commemorated throughout the Church.

Nevertheless, as time went by the number of widely recognised saints grew, and the Church laid down rules which had to be observed before any part of the Church could honour a saint. In the year A.D. 993 the Pope officially proclaimed Ulric of Augsburg to be a saint. From that time it was increasingly held that only the Pope could add a name to the roll of saints, and then only after careful enquiries had been made to ensure that the candidate was worthy of recognition.

One of the abuses which the reformers tried to sweep away was the superstition which had grown up round the worship of the saints. Many people believed that, though dead, the saints still had the power to work miracles, and some thought that it was not proper to pray directly to God but that Christians should ask a saint to

place their requests before him. Most saints were recognised only in very limited areas, and the Calendar was so full that almost every day was the feast of some saint or other.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Church of England tried to remove some of these abuses, and to restrict the number of saints in the Calendar. The first English Prayer Book in 1549 contained only red-letter commemorations, twenty-five in number. The 1552 Prayer Book added black-letter saints for the first time, and included Mary Magdalen amongst them. Previously she had had a red-letter entry. Between then and 1662 several black-letter days were added, including Enurchus, Alban, and the Venerable Bede.

Enurchus seems to be a mis-spelling of Evurtius, and there does not appear to be any real reason for his inclusion. Alban was assigned to a wrong date, but both he and the Venerable Bede are examples of heroes of the Church in Britain.

The red-letter days are, of course, intended to be kept as holy days, 'separated from profane use'. The black-letter days are not observed in this way, but are a means of preserving the memory of some heroes of the Church whose lives may serve as an example to us all. Although there is a fairly large number of British saints in the 1662 list, there are also many others, some of whom are preserved to us only in legends, and who would be completely forgotten if their names did not appear in the Calendar. To the modern churchman many of these names mean very little.

A new Calendar was prepared for the revised Prayer Book, usually known as the '1928 book'. As this revision was not accepted by Parliament, no part of it can be

considered an official document. Nevertheless, although the 1662 Calendar is still really the Calendar of the Church of England, the 1928 commemorations are used in many churches, and since a large number of them are commemorations of British saints we will now consider the changes.

### The Red-Letter Days of 1928

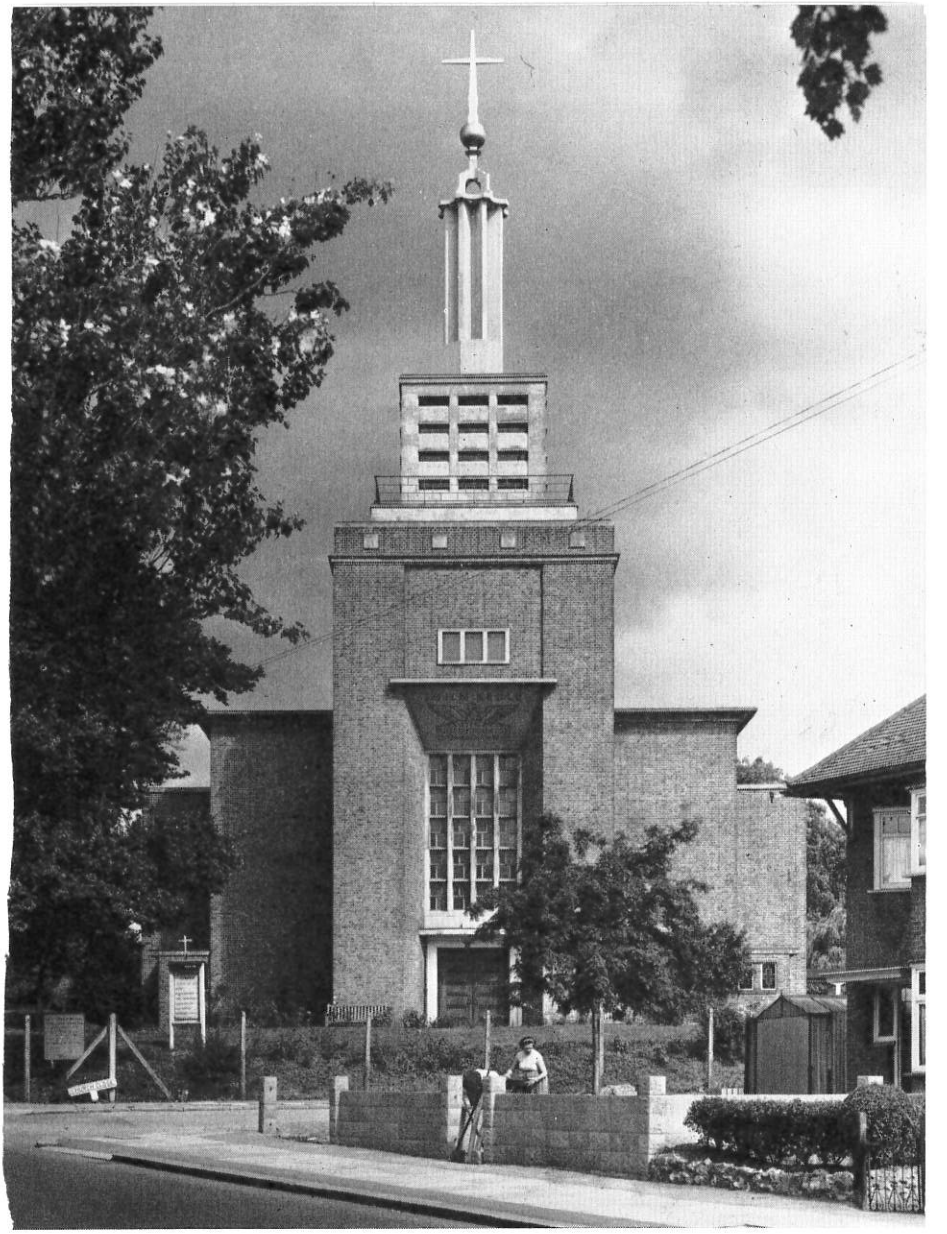
**22 July—St Mary Magdalen**

Mary of Magdala was one of the women who ministered to our Lord, and who helped him and his disciples on their last journey to Jerusalem. The Gospel also records that she was present at the crucifixion, and that she was the first person to see the risen Lord. There is no reason for identifying her, as is sometimes done, with Mary the sister of Martha, or with the woman who anointed our Lord with oil. Very early on the Resurrection morning she went to the tomb. Finding it empty, she mistook our Lord for the gardener, imploring him to tell her where her Master's body had been hidden. Not until he called her by name did she recognise him.[1] This feast was a red-letter day in the 1549 Prayer Book, and has now been restored to the position which it lost in 1552.

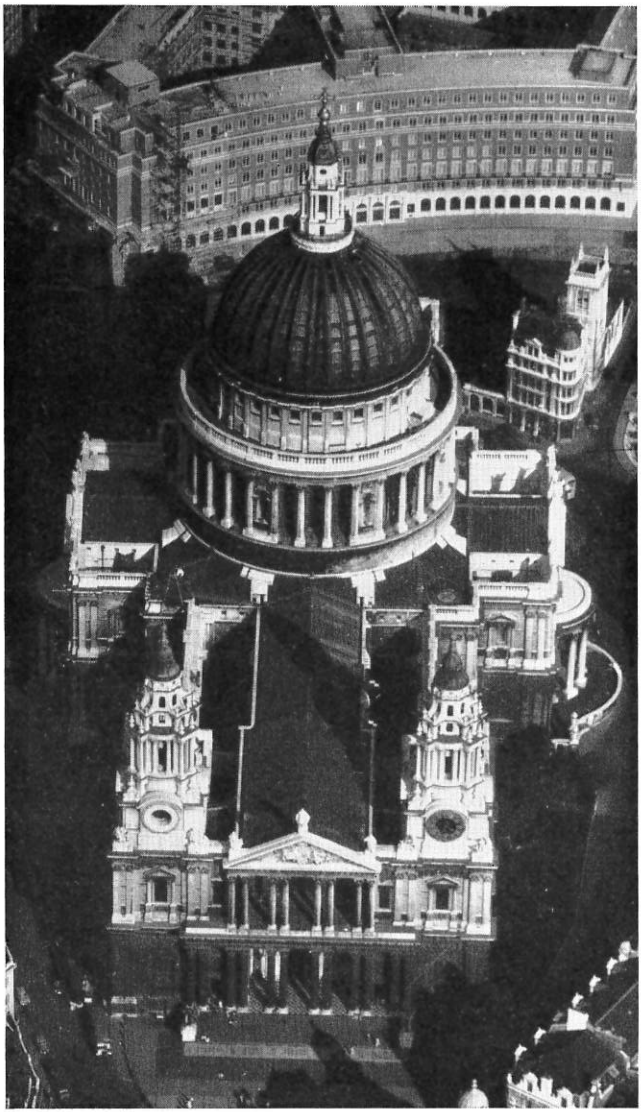
**6 August—The Transfiguration of our Lord**

This alone of the festivals of our Lord, was accorded only black-letter recognition in 1662. The feast is related to an event in the life of our Lord when, taking with him Peter, and James, and John, he went away from the rest of the disciples into the snows of Mount Hermon. As they watched, he appeared to shine with a glory which does not belong to this world, and they heard a voice saying: 'This is my son; hear ye him.' This was the

[1] St John 20.1–18.



11. John Keble Church, Mill Hill



12. St. Paul's Cathedral (exterior)

turning-point in our Lord's life. St Peter immediately recognised him as the Christ, and he started shortly afterwards on the long journey which was to lead him to Jerusalem and his crucifixion. From this moment his chief concern was to teach the disciples that suffering was a necessary part of his work.[1]

## The Black-Letter Days of 1928

The following have been added:

**4 December—St Clement of Alexandria**

Clement was the head of the theological college at Alexandria, and the author of many books. He died about A.D. 210.

**17 December—St Ignatius**

Tradition says that Ignatius was the little child whom Jesus set in the midst of his disciples.[2] Bishop of Antioch, he was arrested and taken as a prisoner to Rome. On the journey he wrote seven letters to the Churches in the towns through which he passed. He looked forward to martyrdom almost with excitement, and in his letters thanked the Churches for their hospitality. He was executed about A.D. 107.

**17 January—St Antony of Egypt**

St Antony was a hermit who lived in a ruined castle on the banks of the Nile, emerging only to preach to the crowds who were attracted by his saintliness. He died in A.D. 356.

**19 January—St Wulfstan**

First Prior, then Bishop, of Worcester, Wulfstan was devoted to children. He did much to raise the standard of Christian worship and regarded the Norman conquest as a punishment for England's sin. To the Normans

[1] St Mark 9.2–8. [2] St Mark 9.36.

*Fig. 25 St Wulfstan.*

he was a rough native and Archbishop Lanfranc summoned him to Canterbury, intending to depose him. The story goes that Wulfstan said that he had been appointed by Edward the Confessor, and that no other should depose him. Fixing his staff in the Confessor's Tomb, he said: 'Take this, and give it to whom you please.' No one could move it until, finally, Wulfstan himself was allowed to try and the crosier came out as though from soft clay. Lanfranc then restored him to his see, where he remained until his death in A.D. 1095.

**26 January—St Polycarp**

Polycarp was Bishop of Smyrna and is said to have been a pupil of St John. He ruled his diocese for forty years until a persecution arose during some games in the arena at Smyrna. Polycarp was arrested in a farmhouse near the city, and ordered to renounce his faith. To pleas and threats alike, the old man answered: 'Eighty and six years have I served him; shall I now deny my king who has saved me?' As he faced death at the stake the flames seemed to form a curtain round the Bishop without harming him until a bystander ran him through with a sword.

**27 January—St John Chrysostom**

A brilliant lawyer, John Chrysostom gave up his career after he had been baptised, and retired to the mountains of Syria. His health broke down, and he returned to Antioch, where he gained the nickname of Chrysostom

(the 'golden-mouthed'). He was made Bishop of Constantinople against his will. In spite of his sympathy for the poor, and his influence at Court, he attracted a certain amount of jealousy and was deposed. So popular was he with the people that he was recalled. Later he was exiled again, this time to the Caucasus mountains where he died in A.D. 407.

**3 February—St Anskar**

Anskar, who died in A.D. 865, was a German who undertook missionary work among the Danes. He was the first Archbishop of Hamburg.

**17 March—St Patrick**

When one remembers the effect of Irish Christianity on England, it seems strange that the patron saint of Ireland was not placed beside those of England, Wales, and Scotland in the 1662 Prayer Book. Patrick was born in Scotland, but, captured by raiders as a baby, he became the slave of an Irish chief. He studied the Christian faith in France, and then returned to Ireland to convert the pagan King Loigaire. He died about A.D. 463.

**20 March—St Cuthbert**

One day a shepherd by the banks of the Tweed had a vision of angels carrying the body of Aidan (August 31st) to heaven. Not very long afterwards Cuthbert, the shepherd, entered Melrose Abbey in order to become a monk and, after training, he was sent on a number of missionary journeys. For a time he was

*Fig. 26 St Cuthbert.*

Prior of Lindisfarne but strict as it was, Cuthbert found the life there too easy, and he became a hermit. He was consecrated as Bishop of Lindisfarne, but two years later he returned to his hermit's cell to die. His body was eventually taken to Durham Cathedral in a coffin which also contained the head of St Oswald (August 5th). He died in A.D. 687.

**11 April—St Leo the Great**

Leo, who died in A.D. 461, was Pope at a time when the Roman Empire was crumbling under the invasions of the Huns and the Vandals. He managed to persuade the Huns to withdraw from Italy when he visited their leader, Attila, with two unarmed friends. He also secured concessions when the Vandals captured Rome. Leo was a great scholar, and his *Tome* was accepted by the Council of Chalcedon, in 451, as the official view of the Church on the Incarnation. So great was his influence that the eastern Church, even though not accepting his authority, regarded him as the greatest scholar of his age.

**21 April—St Anselm**

A native of Italy, Anselm studied in France, and came to England to help in the formation of a monastery at Chester. Whilst in this country he was forced to become Archbishop of Canterbury. He spent most of his time defending the Church against the claims of William II, and in A.D. 1097 he was exiled to southern Italy. He returned to England on the king's death, and almost immediately had to act as peacemaker between the Pope and Henry I. He was always concerned to maintain the authority of the Archbishop of Canterbury over the Archbishop of York. He died in A.D. 1109.

**30 April—St Catherine of Siena**

Catherine of Siena is not to be confused with Catherine

of Alexandria (page 67). The twenty-fifth child of a dyer, she took the vows of a nun at the age of sixteen, and attempted to live the life of a hermit in her own room. Seven years later she began to secure a tremendous influence throughout Italy by means of her saintliness and her letters. Even the warring governments of Italy sought her aid as a peacemaker. She suffered from ill-health throughout her life, and died in Rome in 1380, at the age of thirty-three.

**2 May—St Athanasius**

Having been secretary to the Bishop of Alexandria, Athanasius succeeded to the see on the Bishop's death. Always anxious to defend the faith, he was often involved in arguments so that, during his forty-five years as a bishop, he was exiled no fewer than five times. In spite of this he was, apparently, a genial and much-loved man. He is not the author of the creed which bears his name. The name may have come from the fact that it represents the teaching of Athanasius.

**4 May—St Monnica**

Few men owe more to their mother than did Augustine of Hippo (August 28th). The friend of St Ambrose (April 4th), Monnica shared the Bishop's joy at her son's conversion. She died in A.D. 387.

**25 May—St Aldhelm**

Aldhelm studied at Malmesbury and Canterbury, later returning to the former place as abbot. He founded a number of monasteries and schools. He became Bishop of Sherborne, and died in A.D. 709.

**9 June—St Columba**

After founding a number of monasteries and schools in Ireland, Columba sailed to the island of Iona, off the west coast of Scotland. With the help of twelve friends he

established a monastery there which became the base of a great deal of missionary work in England and Scotland. He spent thirty-four years in Iona, and died there in A.D. 597.

**14 June—St Basil**

Basil belonged to a family of saints: apart from himself, two of his brothers, and a sister, have also been canonised. It was this sister who persuaded him to give up his career as a lecturer, after which he travelled for two years, visiting hermits and learning much of their way of life. He drew up rules for the life of monks, and these were largely copied by Benedict (March 21st). For the last nine years of his life, until this death in A.D. 379, he was Archbishop of Caesarea.

**28 June—St Irenaeus**

Born in Asia Minor, Irenaeus came to France, and was chosen as Bishop of Lyons. He was one of the great peacemakers of the Church, and used his influence to try to prevent a quarrel between the Pope and the bishops of Asia Minor over the date of Easter. He died about A.D. 203.

**5 August—St Oswald**

After his father's death, Oswald went to Scotland where he was converted to Christianity by the monks of Iona. For seventeen years he remained in exile; then he recovered his kingdom. Although he extended his territories, he was chiefly interested in missionary work. A story tells how, one Easter day, hearing that beggars were outside the gate, he gave them, not only his own food, but also the dish which contained it. He died in battle in A.D. 642.

**20 August—St Bernard**

Of noble birth, Bernard cast away the life of luxury which lay ahead of him and, with thirty other young

noblemen, became a monk. So eager was he that he became founder and abbot of a new monastery at Clairvaux, where his example drew many more men to become monks. One of his ex-pupils became Pope in Bernard's own lifetime. He died in 1153.

**31 August—St Aidan**

One of the monks of Iona, Aidan set himself the task of converting northern England to the Christian faith, with the help of the two kings, Oswald and Oswin. He became a bishop in 635, and set up his throne on the island of Lindisfarne, which he made the base of many missionary journeys. He died in A.D. 651.

**16 September—St Ninian**

The story of Ninian is told by the Venerable Bede. He was the first missionary to Scotland and, according to Bede, of royal birth. After studying in Rome he was consecrated bishop, and sent back to Britain to convert the tribes beyond the Roman wall. He brought masons from Tours and, with their help, he built a white stone church at Whithorne in Galloway. This became the centre of the missionary work carried out by Ninian and his monks. He died in A.D. 432.

**19 September—St Theodore**

Like St Paul, Theodore was born in Tarsus. He completed his education in Athens, entered a monastery in Rome and, finally, became Archbishop of Canterbury. Here he showed himself to be firm, but kindly, and he persuaded the bishops to accept rules for the government of their work. He founded a number of new dioceses, taking care to stress the fact that they were each dependent upon Canterbury. It was Theodore who introduced into England the idea of dividing each diocese into parishes.

**4 October—St Francis of Assisi**

Francis entered his wealthy father's business as a cloth merchant. His experience as a prisoner of war determined him to give away everything he had, and to lead a life of poverty, prayer, and good works. Going from place to place preaching, he attracted a number of followers for whom he provided a rule of life, which was approved by the Pope. He became famous for his works of healing and kindliness, and for his love for all God's living creatures. He died in A.D. 1226, at the age of forty-five, in the church where he had first felt the call of God.

*Fig. 27 St Francis.*

**22 October—Alfred, King of the West Saxons**

Alfred lived in stormy times, when the Danish invasions of Britain were at their worst. Following the breach of a treaty by the Danish king, Alfred led his people against the Danes, and was accepted as champion both of England and of the Church. More than anyone else, he prepared the country for union under one king. He was a champion of the poor, and he founded a monastery for men at Athelney, and a convent for women at Shaftesbury. He encouraged learning by the foundation of schools. A wise and kindly king, his reign was dogged not only by invasion, but also by ill health. He was fifty-two years old when he died in A.D. 901.

**2 November—The Commemoration of All Souls**

As the previous day is devoted to the commemoration

of all Christian saints, the 1928 Prayer Book provides, on 2 November, for remembering all Christian people who have died. It is on this day that we remember in our prayers all the souls who have died in every age and place, and ask God to give them peace.

**8 November—Saints, Martyrs, and Doctors of the Church of England**

The octave of All Saints' Day is set aside for the commemoration of all who have been heroes of the Church of England, either by the holiness of their lives, by their death for the faith, or by their teaching.

**17 November—St Hilda**

A princess by birth, Hilda became a nun under the influence of St Aidan (August 31st). For some time she was abbess of a convent at Hartlepool; later she founded a mixed monastery, containing both monks and nuns, at Whitby. Such was her nature that she became known as 'Mother' to those under her; such was her wisdom that kings and princes did not think it beneath them to consult her. She presided over the great Synod of Whitby in 664 and, though the decision of the conference was against her personal feelings, she accepted it loyally. She died in A.D. 680.

*Fig. 28 St Hilda.*

Sixteen black-letter days have been removed from the 1928 Prayer Book, and an inspection of the Calendar at

the front of this book will quickly show which they are.

The 1928 Prayer Book also provides propers (that is, collects, epistles and gospels) for Christmas Eve, the week-days during Lent, those week-days during Easter and Whit-week which previously had no proper, and for the Rogation Days. It also gives propers for eight black-letter days.

In addition, 'common' propers are provided, which may be used for any hero of the Church who has not a proper of his own, and for certain other occasions such as the harvest thanksgiving, or the patronal festival of a church.

# 8

# *Prayer Book Revision Today*

As we have already seen, the Calendar of the Church is not something which is fixed and completely unchangeable. Additions have been made—in bewildering numbers in the Roman Catholic Church—and names have been dropped when they have ceased to have any meaning for the Church as a whole. The 1928 Prayer Book represents the most recent attempt of the Church of England to bring its Calendar up-to-date, but there have been other changes and a good deal of discussion is going on at the present moment on this subject.

One problem arises from the fact that there are no rules for the canonisation of saints in the Church of England. Although the Roman Catholic Church has continued to make saints since the Reformation, no heroes of the Church of England who have lived since that time have been added to the Calendar. As a result, the most recent name, even in the 1928 Calendar, is that of Catherine of Siena, who lived six hundred years ago.

This does not mean that there have been no saintly characters in the Church of England since the Reformation—but merely that the procedure for canonisation does not exist.

There are, however, three names which suggest that the list of saints is not closed finally. In 1662 the name of

King Charles I was added as a red-letter day. At that time many people undoubtedly felt that the king had been martyred, and the Church shared that view. If, in early times, the only form of canonisation was by popular approval, there can be little doubt that this was the authority for the inclusion of Charles I in the Calendar.[1]

The 1928 Prayer Book added the name of another king who has not been canonised by the Pope, though in the black-letter list. Since the 1928 Book has not been approved by Parliament it may, however, be held that King Alfred has not been formally canonised. There can be no doubt about the holiness of his life, and his keen support of the Church, and it is surprising that he was not canonised many, many years ago.

On the fiftieth anniversary of the consecration of Edward King (1829–1910) as Bishop of Lincoln, the Archbishop of Canterbury celebrated the Holy Communion in Lincoln Cathedral with a proper collect, epistle, and gospel for the Bishop. This proper may now be used throughout the diocese on March 8th by clergy who desire to do so, and also in certain places beyond its boundaries. The use of a proper suggests that the Archbishop intended to canonise Bishop King, since such a form is normally restricted to saints.

It has long been the custom to dedicate churches to God in the name of particular saints, normally those of local interest, or upon whose feast day the church was consecrated. Thus, churches dedicated to St Botolph, the patron saint of travellers, are often found just outside ancient city gates, whilst the church of St Sidwell, in Exeter, is dedicated in the name of a local saint. We might expect to find that a church dedicated to St Andrew

[1] The special service for use on January 30th was withdrawn in 1859.

was consecrated on November 30th though this may not always be so. In recent years a few churches have been dedicated in the name of those who have lived in England since the Reformation. The five churches dedicated in the name of 'Charles, King and Martyr' are examples.

Apart from these, the churches bearing post-Reformation dedications fall into two main groups:

The first group contains the churches which were definitely consecrated in the name of a hero of the Church. These are:

John Keble Church, Mill Hill, London
Bishop Andrewes Church, Morden, Surrey
James Hannington Church, Aldrington, Sussex.

The second group consists of churches which have been built as memorials to English bishops, and the name of the bishop has stuck, even though the church was not so dedicated. This seems to be rather like the early canonisations by local churches, when men gained the title of saint in their home districts through popular acclaim. These churches are:

Bishop Latimer Church, Birmingham,
Bishop Ryder Church, Birmingham,
William Temple Church, Manchester.

In some parts of the Church of England local Calendars are in use. Some dioceses and cathedrals have added to the Calendar, as printed in the Prayer Book, the recognition of men and women who have served the Church in the area concerned. Some of the universities and religious communities have followed much the same practice, including the names of their founders, benefactors, and saintly members. Many of the men included in these lists are well remembered in the places with which

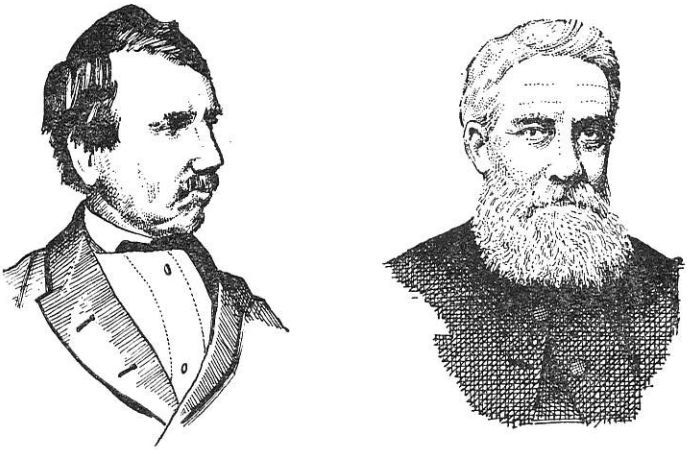


*Fig. 29 David Livingstone and Edward James Peck.*

they were connected, but are often hardly known beyond. The Calendar of the Church as a whole must be kept within reasonable limits, and it is better to include such names for purely local commemoration.

In some other parts of the Anglican Communion there has been a great deal of revision. The Scottish Calendar has been altered twice during the present century by the addition of local names. The Church of Ireland issued a Prayer Book in 1878 containing only red-letter days which included, not very surprisingly, St Patrick.

A new Calendar was prepared for use in Canada in 1955, including a large number of new names 'without thereby enrolling or commending such persons as saints of the Church'. Quite a number of the new names are those of pre-Reformation saints who have not been in-

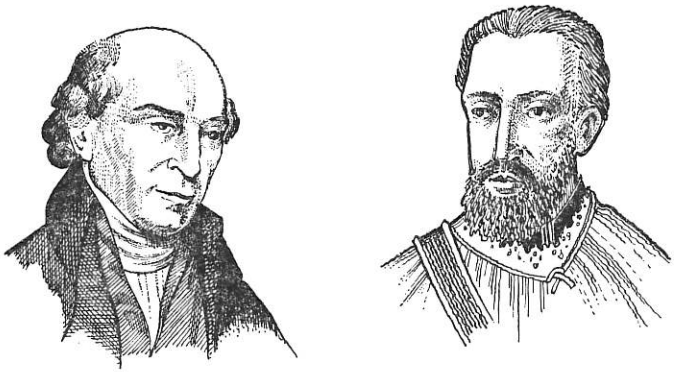


*Fig. 30 William Carey and Francis Xavier.*

cluded in the English Calendars but from that stage the list strikes boldly forward to include names particularly connected with missionary work in Canada and elsewhere. Among them are John and Charles Wesley, David Livingstone, and Edward James Peck, missionary to the Eskimo. The last-named died as recently as 1924.

In other parts of the Anglican Communion new names reflect the growth of the Church during the great period of missionary work which has carried Christianity to the uttermost parts of the earth during the past three hundred years. The African Calendars include Bishops Gray and Hannington, as well as Francis Xavier; in India we find Reginald Heber, the second Bishop of Calcutta, and the missionary William Carey.

In Borneo the war of 1939–45 is already making its

mark in the Calendar, and the Bishop has written of his intention to include the name of the Reverend Lim Siong Teck, who was murdered by the Japanese for helping a Dutch pilot who had crashed.

Every age, every country, has had its saints and its heroes. Of these, some will be remembered everywhere, whilst others will remain of local importance. It is good, therefore, that the Church should remember those who, by their lives or death, have given us an example of what it really means to be a Christian.

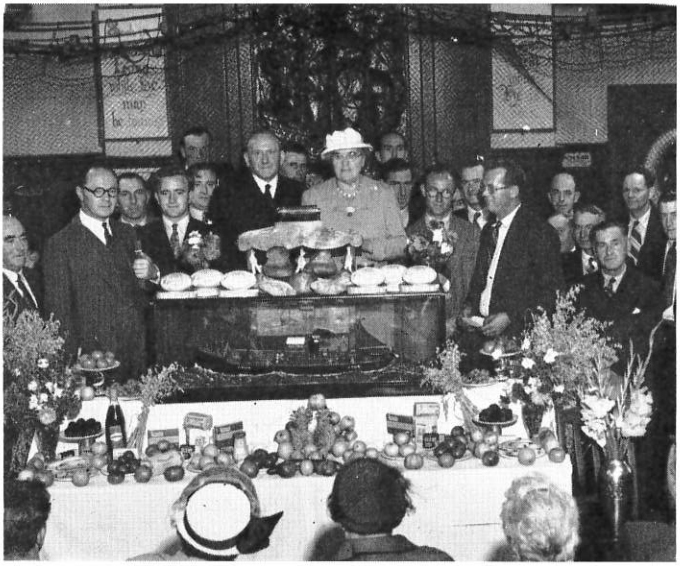
As time goes by, the Calendar will doubtless be further revised. No rules have been laid down for this and it is probable that, within the Anglican Communion, each province will add its own names for recognition within the province. The difficult task is to maintain a balance between making sure that no really worthy name is omitted on the one hand, and overcrowding the Calendar on the other.

Something has already been said of churches which have been dedicated in the name of Christians of more recent times, and it may well be that some names may eventually be included in the Calendar because their bearers have become the patron of a Church, or of a group of people.

At one time, patron saints were believed to have an especial care for particular places or people. In quite early times the custom grew up of building churches over the tombs of martyrs, and the church was then dedicated in the name of that martyr, who then became its patron. In the course of time, patron saints were often adopted by the workers in particular trades, often because the saint had practised that particular craft himself. St Luke, the beloved physician, is the patron of doctors, and the

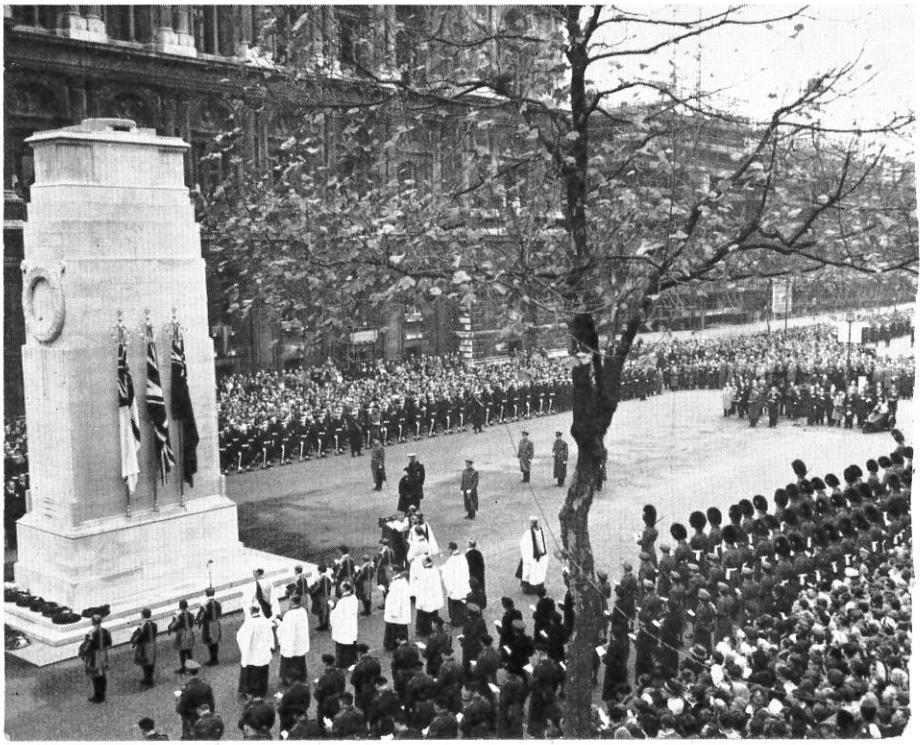
13. The Consecration of a Church

14. The Mayor attends Divine Service on Civic Sunday



15. A Harvest Festival

16. The Cenotaph on Remembrance Day



brothers Crispin and Crispinian are associated with cobblers in the same way. St Blaise was the patron of wool-combers, having been torn to pieces by wool combs during his martyrdom.

Sometimes a legend gave rise to patronage. It is said, for example, that St Christopher was a ferryman and that one stormy night, when the river was in full flood, a small child knocked at the door of his hut and asked Christopher to carry him across the river. After refusing at first, the old man was eventually persuaded to help. As he waded

*Fig. 31 St Christopher and the traveller.*

farther and farther into the water, he felt his burden becoming heavier with each step. When he reached the other side, he found that he had been carrying our Lord. Because of his struggles in the rushing water, Christopher has become the patron of all wayfarers

Another patron saint of travellers is St Botolph, and churches dedicated to this saint are often found just outside the walls of ancient towns, as at Leicester and Colchester. Four churches in the City of London were dedicated to St Botolph, and distinguished by the names of the near-by gates—Aldgate, Aldersgate, Bishopsgate, and Billingsgate. All but the last named survive to this day. At Boston in Lincolnshire the great tower of the parish church of St Botolph served as a mark for travellers by sea as they entered harbour.

Towns and countries also adopted patron saints. St Patrick, the missionary to Ireland, became the patron saint of that island; St George became the patron of England after it was believed that he had helped English soldiers during the Crusades. The patron saint of London is St Paul whose cathedral dominates the city, and whose emblem—a sword—appears in the city coat of arms with the cross of the national patron.

The Roman Catholic Church still assigns patrons to groups of people and to those who follow new crafts which have previously had no patron. Quite recently St Clare was pronounced to be the patron saint of television. A legend records that, as she lay dying in A.D. 1253, she desired to be present at a celebration of the Mass. She was too ill to move, but she was rewarded with a vision of a Mass that was being celebrated some miles away at that moment.

There is hardly any body of people which has not its

patron saint. Beggars prayed to St Giles, and shepherds to St Cuthbert. Even the animals were not left out—St Ambrose was the patron of geese, and St Martin of domestic pets. Cats had their own patron, St Gertrude of Nivelles. St Nicholas was the patron saint of children, and St Hilary was believed to be the especial friend of backward children.

Certain saints were believed to have a special power to help those who were facing difficulty or danger. We have already seen that St Christopher was believed to guard against accidents or sudden death. St Patrick, who is said to have rid Ireland of snakes, was regarded as the protector of men against these reptiles, whilst men prayed to St Lucy when they had a sore throat, or to St Trophimus when they were suffering from gout.

Enough has been said to show how the patronage of saints made some of them very popular in the Middle Ages. Today, when one hears less of patron saints, fewer recent heroes of the Church are likely to find their way into the Calendar in this way. It would be a pity, though, if we fell into the mistake of thinking that saints are always people who lived a long time ago. From time to time, new names will be added to the roll of those who have rendered exceptional service to our Lord and his Church, and you may be quite sure that there are some people alive at this present moment who will one day be revered as saints. God has his heroes in every age.

# 9

# *Special Occasions*

We have now looked at all the formal seasons of the Church's year. There are, however, certain occasions which come round quite regularly in addition to those which we have considered. Some of these are directly connected with the Church, others are civic occasions when the whole community takes part.

The **Feast of the Dedication** of a church takes place each year on the anniversary of its consecration. The feast of the dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem was observed as early as the fourth century. In 1536, the Convocations of the Church of England ordered that the feast was to be kept 'throughout this realm' on the first Sunday in October 'if the day of consecration be not known', and this practice was commended in the 1928 Prayer Book. In those parishes where the date of the consecration is recorded, the feast is held on that date.

The **Patronal Festival** of a church is the feast day of the saint in whose name the church is dedicated and is, in such churches, always a red-letter day. This can be the case because the difference between red- and black-letter days is not intended to make any distinction of saintliness, but only to mark those holy days which were also holidays. The patronal festival was always a local holiday.

It is unusual to find a nonconformist church dedicated in the name of a saint, although quite a number exist. Some Presbyterian churches are, for example, dedicated to St Andrew or St Columba—both saints connected with Scotland, where Presbyterianism first developed in Britain. The corresponding festival is the Church anniversary, which is usually held about the same time each year, and marked by special music and a visiting preacher.

In the nonconformist churches, too, there is a custom to set aside one Sunday in late spring or early summer as the **Sunday School anniversary**. On this day the children take a very active part in the services and spend many weeks beforehand practising special hymns. In some areas, for example in South Yorkshire, great platforms of tiered seats are built at the front of the church, facing the congregation, and the Sunday School children, often wearing new clothes for the occasion, sit there. There is no exactly similar festival in the Church of England.

Some other services are primarily concerned with the life of the nation or town, rather than of the Church.

**Commonwealth Youth Sunday** occurs in May, and is often marked by a parade service of the local youth organisations to the parish church. This may take place at one of the usual services, or a special service may be held at some other time during the day.

**Civic Sunday** also takes place in May in most places. Following the election of a new mayor or, in urban districts, the chairman of the council, one or other of the local clergy or ministers is chosen as chaplain. As a rule, a mayor or chairman will choose as his chaplain a minister of that branch of the Church to which he belongs,

though this is not always so. Within a week or two of taking office the whole council, with their officials and representatives of the public services—the police, fire brigade, and so forth—attend a civic service at which their work for the community is dedicated to God. On such occasions, in a borough, the mayor attends in state, preceded by his mace-bearer, and the members of the council wear their robes.

**Hospital Sunday** is not kept so generally as it used to be. At one time most hospitals were supported almost entirely by voluntary gifts which supplemented the fees paid by their patients. Since 1948, hospitals have formed part of the National Health Service, and all their essential running expenses are paid by the Government. When you are ill, however, it is often the little extras which are important, and these are not always provided by the Health Service. Many hospitals, therefore, have voluntary funds from which they can purchase extra comforts for their patients. To help raise these funds, some towns still have a Hospital Sunday, with a big parade of local organisations who attend the parish church for a special service, and take street collections on behalf of the hospital funds.

**Lammas Day,** on August 1st, is traditionally the day on which the Church offers thanks for the first-fruits of the harvest. By the beginning of August, very little of the harvest has been gathered. Apart from the haysel, or hay harvest, the corn is still standing in the fields, and will be cut during the following weeks, and the swedes, turnips, and potatoes will be in the ground for another six weeks or more.

The Church has always recognised that 'all good gifts around us are sent from heaven above', and the **Harvest**

**Thanksgiving** has become one of the most popular religious observances in the whole year. Its date varies from one part of the country to another because the seasons are later in some places than others. The traditional decoration of the church consists of the fruits of the earth—sheaves of golden corn, loaves of crusty bread, rosy apples, brown-jacketed potatoes, and mammoth cauliflowers. Then there is the harvest from across the sea, consisting of plants which do not really belong to England—clusters of black grapes, and red-cheeked tomatoes. Near the coast you may also find the harvest of the sea, as at Christ Church, Lowestoft, where nets from the fishing boats in the harbour are laced with gleaming fish, and draped in the church. In a mining village you will also find a shining lump of coal flanked by two miner's lamps—the harvest from under the ground. All is a recognition of the fact that we realise that God has answered the prayers of the Church at Rogationtide, and has abundantly blessed the earth.

In recent years, too, you may find packets of tinned goods—cans of peaches and pineapples, bags of tea, and heaps of other things which have been treated in a factory since they were growing in the fields. These serve to remind us that all these things really come from God, even though man has so altered their appearance that they are scarcely recognisable. In some parts of the world, men are living in constant fear of starvation. If the Nile fails to overflow, there will be famine in Egypt; if the monsoon does not arrive, men will starve in India. We have so much for which to thank God when 'all is safely gathered in', and it is not surprising that the growing popularity of the harvest festival has led to the inclusion of a proper for this occasion in the 1928 Book.

We no longer commemorate the fifth of November in church, but it has always seemed good that the Church should remember God's help to our nation in times of danger or trouble. Twice during the twentieth century this country has been engaged in a war which has brought it to a point where it seemed that defeat was certain, and that we could be saved only by a miracle. On both occasions the miracle occurred, and it is right that we should remember that our continued existence as a nation is only by the grace of God. Moreover, the total of suffering in both those wars was tremendous. Hundreds of thousands of men died, many more were crippled, blinded, or maimed in other ways. These men suffered, believing that they were making the world a better place for the generations yet to come.

The first world war ended at the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month in 1918. The whole country went wild with excitement that the four years of danger were over, and it seemed right that this particular hour should be remembered year by year. So, each year, as the eleventh of November came round, a great stillness crept over the country at eleven o'clock in the morning. Everywhere, men stopped work, and stood by their silent machines to remember those who had died between 1914 and 1918. In the streets all traffic came to a standstill, and an unusual quiet fell upon the land.

The second world war lasted from 1939 to 1945, and after it was over it was decided to continue the observance in November. Because of the increasing confusion caused by the two minutes' silence on a workday it was decided to move the observance from November 11th, the feast of St Martin the soldier saint, to the Sunday immediately before that date. On **Remembrance Day**

the Queen and the heads of the Government go to the Cenotaph in Whitehall to keep the silence, and to join in a service conducted by the Bishop of London. All over the country people gather in churches, and around war memorials, to pray that those who died in battle may not have died in vain, and that war may never again scar our land.

One of the most critical periods of the last war was the late summer of 1940, when great waves of bombers swept over the south-east of England bringing death and destruction to cities, towns, and villages. Every morning the people of England awoke, wondering whether that day might see the threatened invasion by sea and from the air. Slowly the Royal Air Force fought back and, as the summer ripened into autumn, the bombers found it more and more difficult to penetrate the island defences. This struggle, known as the Battle of Britain, is still commemorated, and each year one September Sunday is set aside for special services of thanksgiving.

Special services may also be used on occasions of national rejoicing or sorrow. During the war of 1939–45, the King called his people to prayer for victory on a number of occasions. Sometimes, special forms of service are issued on happier days as, for example, in May 1935, when King George V's silver jubilee marked the completion of twenty-five years of happy rule. Similarly, special services were held throughout the country on the Sunday before the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953 so that Queen and people could dedicate themselves to the service of God in the reign which lay ahead. The death of King George VI, almost a year and a half earlier, had been the occasion of services of mourning throughout the land.

So, week by week, and year by year, the praises and prayers of the Church are offered to God. As the seasons roll past, the Church turns first to one aspect, then to another, of the Christian faith. Its saints and its heroes are commemorated, as we remember their lives and pray to follow their example. No one is forgotten in the worship of the Church, and there are occasions on which we remember especially the needs of our nation, our town or village, our friends, our family, ourselves. There are seasons of sorrow, and seasons of rejoicing, times of thanksgiving, and times of prayer so that, by blending together every portion of our lives, and bringing the whole to God, we may endeavour to serve him better.

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